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Voltaire's correspondence with Catherine II

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for the Degree of Master of Arts.

- By -
Reece Stuart, Jr.

State University of Iowa.
1914.
VOLTAIRE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH CATHERINE II.

INTRODUCTION -
Beginning of Correspondence.
Statistics.
Authenticity of Catherine's Letters.

SUBJECTS -
Politics - War.
Philosophy.
Religion.
Reforms.
Voltaire's visit to Catherine.

INFLUENCE AND RESULTS -
Benefits from Catherine.
Proteges of Voltaire.

CHARACTER OF THE LETTERS.
Intimacy and Familiarity.
Flattery.
Esprit.

CHARACTER OF CORRESPONDENTS.
Voltaire's influence upon Catherine.
Character of Catherine.
Character of Voltaire.
There is no part of Voltaire’s long life of eighty-four years, interesting and fruitful in its entirety, which is so interesting and so fruitful as the last quarter of it, the twenty years between 1758 and 1778 spent at Ferney. It is from this period chiefly, that material for this thesis will be drawn, for it was from Ferney that Voltaire directed the letters that were to give him high rank among the world's greatest correspondents. That such a man as Voltaire should devote himself so assiduously and so successfully to letter-writing is not remarkable when the circumstances of his establishing himself at Ferney and the conditions of his life there are clearly understood. A detailed account of his previous life would here be both unnecessary and inappropriate. Suffice it to say that his existence at the Court of Frederic II became intolerable, and the ill-will of Louis XV preventing his return to Paris, he cast about for a location which should guarantee personal safety for himself and should be a retreat from which he might launch his literary bombshells most effectively. This location he found at Ferney. He said, "Philosophers ought to have two or three holes underground against the hounds who chase them." Morley says of him
further on this subject, "If the dogs of France should hunt him he could take shelter in Geneva - If the dogs of Geneva began to bay he could run into France." The other two burrows were Tournay and Les Delices. Again, Voltaire describes himself as standing with his front feet at Lausanne and Geneva and his back feet at Ferney and Tournay, ready to jump in either direction. Enclosed in such surroundings Voltaire's activity as a correspondent redoubled. Moland says of this retreat that "it is assured to him that remarkable influence over his time which has given to the eighteenth century the name of "The Age of Voltaire."

His letters which each day flew broadcast throughout all Europe are the instrument of his domination". It was at Ferney that he spent most of his time, held a court more than royal in its intellectual brilliancy, and earned for himself the titles, "Le Patriarch de Ferney", and "L'homme aux Calas". Each is significant. Voltaire was a true patriarch. About Ferney he built up a village, an agricultural and industrial community of which he was the veritable father. Within the chateau he entertained freely and broadly, receiving so promiscuous an assortment of guests that one of them described his home as a "Noah's Ark." Lanson says, "Ferney was the pilgrimage of free spirits." His other title, "L'homme aux Calas," was to Voltaire the most grateful flattery.
It showed an appreciation of his hatred of injustice and his efforts to defeat it. During three years he had devoted practically all of his time and had worked untiringly to rehabilitate the good name of the man Calas. Calas was a Protestant who had been broken on the wheel after being convicted of having murdered his son. The case was notoriously unjust. The son had been found dead and evidence was easily built up from rumors and gossip with which to convict the father and condemn him to death and his widow and children to torture. The sentence was executed. Later the surviving victims took refuge with Voltaire at Geneva. In the same year the same tribunal condemned to death Sirven, another Protestant accused of the murder of his daughter, found dead in a well after having escaped from a convent. Sirven was thought to have killed her to prevent her accepting the Catholic faith. He however, escaped punishment by taking shelter with the protectors of the Calas family. These cases Voltaire had defended. By pure force of faith in their innocence and by persistence in stating it and publishing it throughout Europe, he had obtained a reversal of the decree and rehabilitated the good name of both Calas and Sirven. The success of his efforts came as a new star in his sky. He was hailed as the champion of the oppressed and the avenger of victims of superstition and religious intolerance.
This period marks the height of his glory in this side of his life work and his reception by the people of the streets of Paris as "L'homme aux Calas" was the first great joy of his triumphal return. His humanity had grown and developed and borne fruit.

The true extent of Voltaire's correspondence will perhaps never be known. The most complete and at present the best edition, the Garnier Edition, edited by Louis Moland, contains approximately 10,000 letters. This number covers the period from 1704 when Voltaire was nine years old, to his death in 1778. But though an estimate of his complete correspondence which approaches the truth with any degree of accuracy is impossible, still it is believed that at the present time about one-fourth of all his letters have been found and published. In the light of certain facts upon which this estimate is based it seems to be a very generous one. Many letters which we know Voltaire to have written have been destroyed, notably those to the Marquise du Châtelet with whom Voltaire resided from 1734 to 1749. Before this time and during this period when Voltaire was frequently separated from the Marquise, he wrote many letters to her. De Voisenon tells of an experiment which he made with the Marquise du Châtelet to determine whether or not she still loved Voltaire. He accomplished it by reading to her some letters from "one of the eight volumes (of letters
in manuscript from Voltaire to the Marquise, letters which she had divided into eight beautiful volumes in-quarto)

These and other letters and papers of Voltaire's were unfortunately turned over to Saint Lambert by Mme du Châtelet, after whose death they disappeared, supposedly destroyed by Saint Lambert. So large a number as this group of letters must have included is but a small part of the number which are lacking. This is evident from a remark which Voltaire made in closing a letter to Formont dated July 24, 1734, "Je n'irai pas plus loin, car voilà, mon cher ami, la trente-troisième lettre que j'écris aujourd'hui." Of these thirty letters which Voltaire wrote on that day, but two have been recovered. And this was in 1734, years before the period in which Voltaire attained the maximum of his capacity as a writer of letters. So it is easy to believe with Henri Beune that "we will continue to find letters of Voltaire until the day of judgment."

The Garnier edition of Voltaire's correspondence includes for the period after his establishing himself definitely at Ferney 6143, letters of which number 5375 are from his own pen and 768 are addressed to him. Of the whole number 55 are anonymous. The others are addressed to or from 486 different persons. This number includes persons of every position in life and as illustration of this fact a few of them are here named and briefly described to show the versatility of Voltaire's acquaintance
and association by means of his letters. The entire list includes kings, queens, princes and princesses, a pope, cardinals, statesmen and churchmen of all ranks, scientists, musicians, persons prominent in almost every profession, writers, sculptors, men and women of letters, prominent and obscure, and extending on down through the various grades of life it includes poor lawyers, city officials, tradesmen, actors, poets and even the very poor people of the lowest orders. A selection of them then, taken at random and here presented alphabetically will convey some idea of the social scope of his correspondence; --


D' Alembert - A member of the Academy, leading mathematician of the age, a founder with Diderot of the Encyclopedia, and as frequent a correspondent of Frederic II and Catherine II as of Voltaire.

D'Argenson - A boyhood school mate of Voltaire and late in life when a magistrate at Dijon, still a correspondent.

D'Argental - Councillor of the "Parlement de Paris" One of Voltaire's most intimate friends; one of few who were always loyal to him, and whom Voltaire frequently consulted about his works. Voltaire always addressed him as his "Cher ange".
Mme. la Comtesse d'Argental - The wife of Voltaire's "cher ange" and a frequent correspondent of her husband's friend.

M. l' Abbé Arnaud - An obscure writer.

M. l' Abbé Andra - Professor Royal at Toulouse and one of those who corresponded most frequently with Voltaire in the effort to prove the innocence of Sirven.

El Signore Lorenzo Guazzesi di Arezzo - An Italian nobleman with whom Voltaire corresponded in Italian.

Phanuel Bacon - An English dramatic author.

Mme. la Margrave de Bade Dourlach -

La Comtesse du Barri - Though an infrequent correspondent, still on such terms with Voltaire as permitted her to send him a miniature of herself encircled with diamonds and still further enriched with two kisses from her lips.

M. le Conseiller le Bault -

Beaumarchais - The author of the "Barber of Seville" and the "Marriage of Figaro".

Beaumont - The most eminent geologist of his century who greatly interested Voltaire because of the geological factor in his own attacks upon the Old Testament.

Le Marquis de Beccarria - One of the pioneers of modern criminology, whose works were loudly applauded
by Voltaire.

M. de Belmont - A theatrical manager.

Cardinal de Bernis - One of Voltaire’s most frequent correspondents, very powerful in the church and in politics.

Jean Bertrand - President of the Parlement de Paris, and later Bishop of Cominges.

Louis Borde - Mechanician and mathematician; bound to Voltaire - whose admiration for him was reciprocated, by a mutual hatred for Rousseau.

Le President de Brosses - President de Parlement, one of the brilliant men of the century, much of whose correspondence with Voltaire however, was unfortunately devoted to a trivial and unworthy quarrel which arose between them over some cords of wood concerned in the purchase of Tourney.

M. le Marquis Albergati Capacelli - Another of Voltaire’s Italian acquaintances.

Catherine II - Empress of Russia, who will be considered later.

Chabanon - A distinguished and skillful musician.

Le Marquis de Chauvelin - A soldier of distinction, a field-marshall and wardrobe master of the king.
Le Duc de Choiseul - A powerful and capable statesman and diplomat, the minister who expelled the Society of Jesus from France, and a frequent correspondent of Voltaire.

Mme. la Duchesse de Choiseul - Like her husband, an admirer and friend of Voltaire with whom she exchanged frequent letters until the time when her husband was deposed. A misunderstanding of Voltaire's attitude toward this event broke off their relations.

Christian VII - King of Denmark.

Christin - An "avocat" at Saint Claude.

Cideville - Another of Voltaire's boyhood friends whose intimacy with him was preserved through letters.

Clairaut (Alexis Claud) - One of the scientists (himself a geometrician and astronomer) who made up the famous expedition sent to measure the length of a meridional degree. (During his life with Mme. du Châtelet, Voltaire had been greatly interested in such subjects).

Mssrs les Comédiens Francais -

Condillac - Abbé du Murem, A famous Lockian philosopher and a member of the Academy.

Constante de Rebecque - A naturalized French citizen from England, a powerful politician renowned for his oratory.
Crosne - Lieut. General of Police who corresponded with Voltaire concerning the Calas affairs.

Damilaville - Who being a Commissioner of the Bureau de Vingtièmes could send to Voltaire books prohibited by the censorship. Their intercourse was extensive and Voltaire advised and greatly assisted him in his work on "L'Honêteté Théologique".

Mme. du Deffand - Who conducted a salon which was one of the most brilliant of the century and of which Voltaire was a faithful habitué during his life in Paris; continued to write to him regularly throughout the rest of his life.

Diderot - Founder of the Encyclopedia and alone responsible for the completion of this epoch-making work.

Duclos - A successful writer of light operas and Voltaire's successor as "Historiographe de France".

Dupont (Pierre Samuel) - Avocat.

Dupuy - Perpetual secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.

Dutens - Professor of History and Morals, like Voltaire, a refugee in Switzerland from France.

Mme. D'Épinay - One of the eighteenth century's most brilliant women of letters.

Le Marquis de Florian - A nephew and favorite of Voltaire; a successful writer of drama, fables, satire and good moralizing.
Le Marquis de Florian - Who had also a part in the affections, as well as in the correspondence of her husband's uncle.

Frederic II - Frederick the Great, King of Prussia; has a remarkable and lasting relation with Voltaire who, after leaving him with the greatest relief, still continued the friendship which close association had smothered for a time; one of Voltaire's greatest and most frequent correspondents.

Goldoni - Called by his compatriots "The Italian Molière", and by Voltaire, who admired him, "Le Peintre de la Nature."

Mme. la Duchesse de Grammont -

Grimm - Intimately associated with Voltaire in the company of Mme. d'Épinay, Diderot and others.

Gros - The curé of Ferney.

Gustave III - King of Sweden.

La Harpe - A poet, critic and dramatist, best known however for his "Cours de Littérature." A disciple and friend of Voltaire with whom he made extended visits at Ferney.

Helvetius - Atheistic philosopher of great note. Associated with Diderot in work upon the Encyclopedie.

M. le President de Hénault - A Magistrate, poet and historian, very intimate with Voltaire and two of his friends, Argenson and Choiseul.
Hennin - A prominent statesman, diplomat, and minister of foreign affairs who corresponded frequently with Voltaire.

M. l'Abbé Irailh - French author and historian.

Laborde - Musician and valet de chambre of the king; visited Voltaire at Ferney.

Lacombe - A bookseller at Paris.

M. le Duc de la Rouchefoucauld - A famous philanthropist who had many ideas in common with Voltaire but who corresponded with him very little.

Le Brun - French poet.

Lekain - The greatest actor of Voltaire's plays; enjoyed Voltaire's patronage and very great admiration.

Fyot de la Marche - A boyhood friend and schoolmate of Voltaire and when a magistrate at Dijon, still his intimate correspondent.

Marin - Journalist, author, royal censor and lieutenant general of the admirality; very close to Voltaire in his correspondence with him.

Marmontal - One of the many literary protégés of Voltaire; author of "Contes Moraux".

Chancelier de Maupeou - A man of great political power, justly unpopular.

Moreau de la Rochette - A famous horticulturist.

Morellet - An abbé, author and philosopher.
Moulton - A Genevan preacher, a great friend of Rousseau. His correspondence with Voltaire concerned the Calas family to whom he had given shelter.

Mme. Necker - Who conducted a salon rivaling in brilliancy that of Mme. du Deffand. Herself a woman of letters and a moralist. Mother of Mme. de Staël.

Noverre - A dancer and director of the dance at the opera.

M. l' Abbé d' Olivet - Had been one of Voltaire's schoolmasters at the Jesuit College; a grammarian of repute, a member of the Academy, and an industrious worker for the encyclopédia.

Palissot - Who made daring attacks upon the Encyclopedists in satire and comedy but had the wisdom to except Voltaire from his thrusts and even managed later to interest him in his work.

Pigalle - The sculptor selected to make the statue of Voltaire for which funds had been raised by subscription.

Stanislaus Auguste Poniatowski - King of Poland whom Voltaire had known in the Cirey period of his life.

Le Duc de Praslin - Soldier and statesman.


Rousseau (Pierre) A dramatic writer.
Mme de Saint Julien - A woman celebrated for her "esprit", who not only corresponded with Voltaire for twenty-two years but often visited him and gave him valuable assistance in the building of Ferney.

Le Marquis de Saint Lambert - A poet, philosopher and encyclopedist whom Voltaire met at the home of Mme de Châtelet and whose liaison with this woman resulted in her death. He was the successful rival of Voltaire who found it difficult to forgive him. Later he was also successful in his rivalry with Voltaire's enemy, Rousseau.

Samrin - A protestant minister.

La Duchesse de Saxa-Gotha - A frequent correspondent of Voltaire.

Schouvalow (Jean) - One of the founders of the University of Moscow and a cordial friend of Voltaire through letters.

Thieriot - An unworthy, parasitic friend whom Voltaire had met when they had worked as clerks together and whose friendship Voltaire continued in spite of Thieriot's treacherous behavior.

Tronchin - (Le Docteur) A fashionable and successful physician.

Tronchin - (Le Conseiller) A Swiss Procureur General.

Turgot - A famous economist and "contrôleur général de finances."

Vegobre - Lawyer at Geneva.

Vernes - Preacher at Geneva.
M. le Duc de Villars - An intimate friend and correspondent who visited Voltaire at Ferney several times.

L'Abbé de Voisenon - Encouraged by Voltaire to undertake a literary career and doing so, was successful.

Le Marquis de Voyer - Master of the stables of the king; corresponded with Voltaire on the subject of a stable which the latter wished to start at Ferney.

Horace Walpole - The English author.

Ximenés - Poet and dramatist whom Voltaire received at Ferney and who sought the hand of Mme. Denis in marriage; dismissed by Voltaire for the theft of a manuscript but later admitted again to his favor.

To convey more strikingly the idea of the very great number of Voltaire's correspondents a complete list of the names of those to whom he wrote during his life at Ferney is here given. As has been explained, such a list is necessarily limited to those correspondents given in the Garnier edition, now very probably incomplete; --

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Abertas    Agay
Abington   Agincourt
Academy Française Ailly

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Veymerange

Vidampierre

Villars

Villemain

Villette

Villevielle

Violaine

Vitrac

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The purpose of this thesis is to give a clear idea of one phase of Voltaire's relations with his correspondents as shown by his letters. Since a comprehensive treatment of his relations with all of his correspondents is here out of the question, one individual may be chosen as representative of one certain class of persons with whom Voltaire corresponded and through letters, as illustrative of a distinct side of Voltaire's character. For instance, Voltaire corresponded with quite a large number of persons of the highest rank—kings, queens, princes and princesses of the royal blood, popes and cardinals. Such a correspondence enabled him to exert his influence most effectively. A peculiar quality of this writer's nature gave to his letters a convincing flavor of intimacy, when he chose to impart it, that rendered successful his efforts to impose a truth upon an unwilling convert. In converting the king he was converting the court, advertising his ideas and impressing the nation. His correspondence with Frédéric II touched upon so many subjects that infallibly it must have been of vital interest, not only to Frédéric's people, but to the world. It is true that he had less direct influence upon the stubborn character of Frédéric than he had had upon others of his correspondents. Still scarcely one of the letters between these two men is without interest to the world for the light they throw on political, social or literary theories. This correspondence however, though very extensive and of such great interest, has been so frequently discussed that further consideration
of it here is unnecessary.

The correspondence with Cardinal Bernis was of another sort. The intimacy which had existed between Voltaire and Frederic and which was preserved in their later correspondence, never was established between Voltaire and Bernis. However, much interest attaches to these letters. They show Voltaire in a totally different phase, for instance, asking for dispensations of one sort or another from the church he has so frequently and forcefully attacked. Many incidents which stand out in this correspondence seem, in the light of the present day, trivial and inconsequential, but these same incidents may serve to illustrate Voltaire in an aspect presented by no others. One letter asks the church's permission for "Le Père Adam", a member of Voltaire's household, to wear a wig which should protect his bald head from the cold of Switzerland. No matter was too small to interest Voltaire and once interested, he worked at the matter in hand until he had accomplished his purpose.

Other kings also "interchanged royal communication" with Voltaire - Christian VIII of Denmark and Gustavus III of Sweden were greatly flattered that Voltaire should show an interest in what was happening in the north. Poniatowski, king of Poland, had met Voltaire in his days at Cirey and continued the acquaintance by letter-writing. Joseph II was as disappointed as Voltaire was piqued that the royal displeasure of his mother prevented his visiting at Ferney.
To represent the phase of Voltaire's character shown in relations with persons of the highest social position by birth or authority, the correspondence with Catherine of Russia will be considered here. It is well to repeat here that a study of these letters does not attempt a presentation of Voltaire's correspondence as a whole. In so universal and so versatile a correspondence as that of Voltaire, the letters of no one individual or group of individuals can be selected as representative of the whole. But a thorough treatment of these letters to one person may prove interesting and valuable for the insight which it gives of the one phase of the writer's character as it is portrayed in these letters. And since so much of Voltaire's correspondence with the persons of this rank must be disregarded as not falling within the scope of a work of this length, that small portion of it from the King of letters to the empress of a great nation is here considered.

Catherine II, Empress of Russia, came closer to Voltaire in their relations which, as they never saw each other, were dependant entirely upon letters, than any of his royal correspondents except Frederic. While yet a child she was called with her mother from her home in Germany to become the wife of Peter, Grand Duke of Russia. During her early life in Russia she devoted herself faithfully to reading and it was during this period that she first became acquainted with the genius of Voltaire. Upon
her accession to the throne after the murder of her husband, then Czar, she demonstrated immediately her excellant qualifications for her position. She started an active policy of extension. Her management of the division of Poland, of relations with Prussia and the alliances including Austria, Prussia, France and England, of the Turkish war, of the cementing of the Crimea to the Russian Empire, and of all diplomatic questions in which she was her own counsellor, are evidence of the qualities which gave her the title—"La Femme Politique". She had to pass through many political and social crises before she felt secure upon her throne. These very crises were the means of teaching her the nature of her adopted nation and the psychology of the Russian character. Reform became her ambition. She applied it to organic improvement of her empire and to education. She founded schools, both for boys and for girls, an academy for the development of Russian literature, hospitals and medical colleges, and in every way, even by her own literary efforts, sought to provide for the instruction of her subjects. In this work she was assisted and encouraged chiefly by foreigners with whom she corresponded. The greater part of her correspondence with those of her own rank, Frederic II, Joseph II, Gustavus III of Sweden and Prince Henri of Prussia, was political in its purpose. Her most interesting letters were written to the prominent literary men of her time. The "Cambridge Modern History says, "Her literary correspondence with Grimm,
Voltaire and Diderot was of some political significance; she meant these 'literati' to influence the public opinion of Europe by blowing the Russian trumpet. But was this her only motive in this correspondence? In spite of her dominant political interest, was she not moved by some genuine love of literature and some genuine sincerity in her attachment for these correspondents? Too much has been written and stated on each side of the question to admit of an impartial consideration and judgment of it before a careful study of the letters themselves. Let that then be the basis upon which to judge of her sincerity and her ulterior motives. In one of the letters Voltaire wrote to her, "Happy the writer who, a century hence, shall tell the history of Catherine II". Together, he and Catherine were then telling it better than they knew and giving such a picture of this empress as no one else has since been able to present.
The first letters exchanged between Catherine and Voltaire are lost and we have therefore, no positive knowledge of the circumstances which led to this remarkable correspondence. As an introduction to a detailed treatment of it a few figures and dates, explanatory of the number and frequency of the letters, may serve to throw some light upon the general character of the correspondence as a whole. As before and as hereafter in this thesis, these statistics and remarks must be limited in their application to the letters contained in the Garnier collection. The correspondence began in September 1763, with a letter from Catherine. It contains altogether 165 letters of which number 54 are addressed from Catherine to Voltaire and 91 to Catherine from Voltaire. The period during which the letters were most frequently exchanged was included in the years 1770 and 1771. Between Feb. 8, 1770 and Dec. 16, 1771 there were written 71 letters, 33 from Catherine and 38 from Voltaire, or almost half of the entire number included in the correspondence. In the six years that followed the last date, Dec. 1771, only 56 letters were written which have been discovered. And in the nineteen months preceding the last letter of the correspondence, the six months from June 14, 1776 to Dec. 5, 1777, there were exchanged only six letters which we now possess, two from Voltaire and four from Catherine. The last letter, one from Voltaire, is dated Dec. 5, 1777. When he wrote it he had not yet received the last one from Catherine written Nov. 23 - Dec. 4, and
there is no answer to this letter. A break in the correspondence between Oct. 18, 1775 and Jan. 24, 1777 is not due to the loss of any letters for Voltaire says in his letter of the latter date, "I have not written to her (C.) for more than a year." The next longest lapse, from Jan. 1777 to Catherine's letter of Oct. 1777, however, is caused by the loss of letters to which Catherine's is an answer. There were probably other letters from both Catherine and Voltaire, written after the last ones contained in this collection, for there is no air of finality evident in them and several affairs of interest to each were as yet in an incomplete state.

In the first letter, the one from Catherine dated Sept. 1763, a year and two months after she had ascended to the throne of Russia, she mentions having received the second volume of Voltaire's History of Peter the Great, and regrets that she must answer only in prose Voltaire's verses addressed to her. But she makes no mention of any previous letters from him excepting perhaps one or possibly two letters from Catherine herself to Voltaire. Her only communication with him up to this time, had been through Pictet, her secretary, and no evidence of any previous letters from Voltaire to her exists, except the verses which she mentions in the first letter from her contained in this collection. It is not probable that these verses were in the form of a letter. Moreover, the contents of the letter of Sept. 1763, seem to indicate that it is Catherine's first personal communication with Voltaire for she begins their correspondence by declaring
her indebtedness to his works for her appreciation of good literature. Two letters from Pictet and one addressed to him from Voltaire proceed Catherine's first letter. The one from Voltaire mentions a message which "she had deigned to dictate to her giant (Pictet)" and gives elaborate expression to the delight with which it had been received. This letter from Voltaire to Pictet gave Catherine an opportunity which she seized upon of addressing a letter to Voltaire from herself. This is the letter of Sept. 1763. It seems very probable then that the first overtures toward any personal correspondence came from Catherine. Whether or not this fact is of significance as to the motives of the correspondence will be seen later.

If we wish to form ideas on the character of a person from a study of that person's correspondence, it is well to be sure, or as sure as is reasonably possible, that the letters themselves are of that person's own composition.

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An article on Catherine II of Russia in the Encyclopedia Británnica, Eleventh Edition, makes this statement—"Her letters are full of vivacity, color and at times, of insight and wit, but she never learned to write either French or German correctly. The letters to Voltaire attributed to her are not hers and were probably composed for her by Andrei Schuvalov". But this article is merely a short, unsigned argument which does not attempt to give evidence of any kind.
Again at this point it must be stated that material for this thesis has been gathered from limited resources. It has been impossible to obtain access to the official archives and other documents at St. Petersburg, where undoubtedly, positive evidence for the solution of the question here involved is to be found. Without it however the writer has used and interpreted such evidence as has been available.

Evidence exists within the letters themselves, which indicates that Catherine herself, was the writer. From the tone of her letters it would often be difficult to determine whether they were written by a man or by a woman. But Catherine was not "mannah" in the more modern fashion; she was masculine. The Prince de Ligne called her "Catherine Le Grand", and had a secretary been instructed to attempt to deceive Voltaire into believing his correspondent was the empress herself, the natural result would have been letters laboriously feminized. As they stand they seem to be true expressions of the real Catherine. Very frequently they are dated so as to show that they were written during several days, sometimes weeks. A secretary would probably have written a letter at a sitting; the empress wrote as opportunity offered. Finally we can do no more than accept the work of the writer herself who says in a letter dated March 19-30, 1772, "I have received in order sir, your two letters, that of the twelfth of February and that of the sixth of March. I have not responded before this because of an injury to my hand, due to my own awkwardness, which has for more than three weeks
prevented my writing. I have been hardly able to sign my name". Another of her correspondents, the Prince of Ligne, was in much the same relations with Catherine as was Voltaire. In a letter to him Catherine said, "I occupy myself very willingly with the care of responding to you." In an article "Catherine II et le Prince de Ligne" by Lucien Perey, "Revue de Paris", June and July 1895, the author says "The happiness of the Prince de Ligne was at its climax in receiving a response from the hand of the empress herself, 1780". Later the same article says; "The empress did not write to everybody and a letter from her hand was a marked favor". She is known then to have written with her own hand, letters to the Prince de Ligne, to Madame Denis after Voltaire's death, and to others. Why should Voltaire then, have been an exception; he who received so many other favors from her? From these and other pieces of evidence it appears highly improbably that Catherine capable and self-sufficient as she was in every other respect, should have entrusted to a secretary a correspondence which, for a time at least, had so much interest for her?

The collection of Voltaire's correspondence with Catherine reflects in the matter of its versatility of subject, style and mood, the same qualities which are characteristic of the writer's entire work. All imaginable subjects are touched upon, from the science of war and the use of armed chariots, to the abstractions of metaphysics, and from the prevention of smallpox by vaccination to the building of ice-palaces. But
here again, a complete list of the subject matter of these letters taken separately appears superfluous. For obvious reasons the most important and most conspicuous topics of discussion are selected. Of these subjects none holds so large a place in the letters to and from Catherine II as politics and war. Brune‡ière says of Voltaire, "No man was ever more desirous of being in intimate and perpetual contact with public opinion - in order to direct it better," and Voltaire says of himself in a letter to the Empress, "I do not believe that there is in your states a single man who interests himself more than I do in the accomplishment of all your designs." Russia at the time when Voltaire corresponded with that nation's empress, offered a rich field for the play of this curiosity. Catherine had just issued her "Instructions for a Code of Russian Law" only to find herself prevented from a completion of this task by the exactions upon her time which came with the war. For several years Russia was to struggle with the Turk and if all that came to Voltaire's net was fish, that was a rare opportunity and a prize indeed. A growing intimacy with the Empress admitted him further into the secrets of state affairs than it was the privilege of other foreigners to enter. He first of all had the true reports of Russian victories and defeats. Catherine found in him a publicity agent capable of successfully contradicting unfavorable reports of her campaign which were so spread abroad by the journals of France and Italy, and Voltaire, if he were in this respect a tool, at least was a willing one. For his interest and
delight in these wars were almost childish. It flattered his vanity to be the one who always had correct information and could contradict the false reports. Catherine would write to him. "You have more than once said to me that you wished to hear of the defeat of Moustapha; well this victorious emperor of the Turks has lost Moldavia entirely - Yassi is taken; the vizir has fled in great confusion, beyond the Danube. This is what a courier announces to me this morning, and it is something to silence the Paris Gazette and the Courrier of Avignon." He was desirous, he said, of contributing in some slight measure to the Russian victories, and for this he advocated the use of armed war chariots, such as had been used by the ancients. This suggestion, received at first as a joke by Catherine, haunted the mind of the old philosopher. Elaborate explanations of the development and change in the methods of warfare since the days of the ancients were necessary to finally persuade him that for fighting the Turks, spread out as skirmishers and concealed behind rocks and trees, such an attack would be impractical. Still if he could offer no practical assistance with such suggestions, he never failed to have an optimistic and encouraging faith in a glorious final victory for Russia, with visions of Catherine installed as empress of the enlarged empire in Constantinople, its new capitol. This was his ambition for her, one which he reiterates in nearly every letter. And he wishes her to understand that this is not an unselfish demand which he makes upon the Russian valor. He wants the Russian capital located in a
climate which he can endure long enough to present himself at its court. A more altruistic ambition is for the Greeks. Early in the campaign he had had visions of Catherine's conquering all of the Mediterranean world and had pictured her rebuilding Troy. From Troy his attention turned to Sparta. Writing of the Spartans he says, "It is time they had no other master than my protectress, or rather, that they be free under her flags." Catherine, whether at Voltaire's instance or not, did actually try to make terms with the Greeks which should ally them with her, but her advances were indifferently received and she explained to Voltaire that "The Greeks, the Spartans have degenerated; they prefer rapine to liberty." And the answer came back, "May your Majesty only permit me to pity these poor Greeks who have the misfortune to still belong to Turkish speaking people. These are some of the little mortifications I experience in the midst of the pleasure which your victories give me ------But what will become of my poor Greece? Am I to have the grief of seeing the children of the gallant Alcibiades obey others than Catherine'The Great?" International politics made a fascinating game for the hermit of Ferney, but one which is played with heavier pieces than he was accustomed to moving in the dictation of opinion to his own nation. Moreover, it was a subject in which he had never interested himself sufficiently to make a study of it. Results were less direct and more difficult of attainment. Still Voltaire considered them worth the effort. During several years of the war with the Turk, he had, in the interests of humanity,
urged an alliance between Frederic of Prussia, Maria Therese of Austria, and Catherine of Russia. Such an alliance he thought, would guarantee the overthrow of the dominion of the Turk, would free the women of the harems, a cause emphasized by Voltaire as especially worthy, would open up an enormous tract of the world to the progress of modern civilization, and as he said, would spread the Christian religion and the light of reason over a land, sadly in want of it. But Frederic does not welcome the project and Catherine will make no advances. Frederic accepts her declaration that Russia is in a condition to need no alliances and in a letter to Voltaire includes a verse in praise of Catherine which includes with statement that a leader of Catherine's merit can dispense with assistance. So Voltaire is frustrated in another attempt. He is obliged to conclude this affair also with a letter to Catherine in which he sends her Frederic's verses and adds the comment, strikingly inconsistent coming from him, "I have not the honor of agreeing with crowned heads. It would be better in your situation to be aided than to be praised." Here he dropped the subject of the alliance.

Such were his attempts to influence national and international affairs in a political way. He himself, would have admitted the failure of his efforts. But it is doubtful that he realized the reason for their failure. This however, need not be an imputation either of obtuseness or of vanity, though he had seen the powerful effect of his influence in other directions. In the light of present advancement of
the study of international policy, his failure to understand is easily comprehensible. Then the effects of geography, climate, race and tradition, for example, had not been sifted by political economists. Voltaire was not markedly behind his time in this, but for trying to take part in such affairs he utterly lacked an understanding which Morley says is "only to be grasped through a scientific study of human nature which Voltaire had never made." He did not realize that there was more concerned in the conquering of the Turk and the spreading of civilization than mere military supremacy. Nor did he stop to consider the conditions which would then have resulted from an effort on the part of Russia, the most barbarous of the great powers of Europe, to impose a civilization upon the chaotic countries of the Mediterranean world. His dream was of the absolute expulsion of the Turk from Europe and the re-establishment of Greek civilization. Why could not have Russia, Prussia and Austria allied accomplish this? Doubtless they could have done much toward this end, ideally a worthy one. But here Voltaire's ignorance of conditions brought his schemes against a solid wall. He did not understand that there were deep-lying, powerful political forces at work and national interests at stake of far greater magnitude than his own pet schemes. Catherine told him of her victories and Frederic exchanged poetry and intimate correspondence with him; but neither of them explained to him, if they actually realized themselves, just why an alliance such as he proposed, was impossible. Every
interest of each of the three nations was diametrically opposed to those of the other two. They had divided Poland among themselves, not as an act in any way resembling a friendly association between themselves, but with an entirely opposite significance, to prevent any one of them from too great an acquisition of new territory. The philosopher at Ferney did not appreciate this. Much of the real significance of such things never reached him. He looked upon the division of Poland as a "glorious event". Lord Brougham in his life of Voltaire, asserts that there was "one exception to Voltaire's love of liberty and justice - his flattery of Catherine on her execrable partition of Poland with Frederic". It is more probably the correct interpretation of that fact to say that Voltaire did not understand the case and was as incompetent to judge it as he was to attempt to influence any international affairs. Harper rightly says of him, "Literature, not politics or even philosophy was his profession."

It is difficult to reconcile Voltaire's eagerness for details of Catherine's victories, his lust for war and for the defeat of the Turk, with his oft expressed hatred of war and of oppression of the weak by the strong. It all seems contrary to his philosophy. After a report of two Russian victories he wrote to the Empress a letter fearful lest she should make a peace which would not obtain for her nation every possible advantage which would be wrung from the exhausted Turk. "Why make peace when you can push your conquest so far? Your Majesty will tell me that I do not think philosophically
enough, and that peace is the greatest of blessings. No one is more convinced than I of this truth; but permit me to desire very earnestly that this truce be signed by your own hand in Constantinople. The city was the goal to which Voltaire's ambition for Catherine urged a continuation of campaigns. In a later letter he is even more aroused on this same subject. He says of the Turks: "Were it not for my feelings of humanity I should say that I would like to see them all exterminated, or at least chased so far that they would never return". And further on in the same letter he says, "We French, Madame, are better than they; we talk an amazing lot of foolishness, we commit many stupidities, but all of that passes quickly; it is forgotten at the end of a week. The gaiety of the nation seems unalterable. Paris learns of an earthquake which has upset thirty leagues of the country at Saint Domingue; they say "That's too bad", and they go to the opera. The most serious affairs are turned to ridicule." A last phrase of this same letter says that "it is fine weather for fighting Turks." How account for this animosity against the unfortunate Turk? How give this desire for his annihilation a place in the philosophy of the Hermit of Ferney? The letter quoted above offers some explanation however insufficient, in answer to the question. Voltaire gives here a picture of the gaiety of the French people and none possessed this quality in greater measure than the man who recognized it most clearly in his fellow-countrymen. Much of what he writes on this subject then is done half in a spirit
of flippancy but also half, and perhaps more than half, in earnestness. A man who says, "It is fine weather for fighting Turks", may jest with a purpose and do so effectively. The jest is obvious but the purpose lies only slightly under the surface. His purpose, moved by his hatred of the Turk, seems to him a humanitarian cause. He repeatedly declares his hatred of the horrors and oppressions of war but in this case he emphasises a hatred of other horrors and oppressions and evils which war could wipe out. In this lay his inconsistency. As he stated his attitude toward Catherine's war, he desired the annihilation of the Turk, not because he was the Turk, not because he was a Mohamedan; but because he was a tyrant - because his religion dictated tyranny over millions of people and stood blocking the advance of enlightenment, civilization and reason. He deplored the servile condition of the Greeks, a people who in a past age had exemplified the very principles which he himself now advocated; he raged at the absolute enslavement of women, and at the "universal darkness" which excluded the modern light. In this sentiment Voltaire was true to his humanitarian sentiments. But in the methods of his reasoning, his enthusiasm for Catherine led him into a great inconsistency with other expressed theories on the subject of war, and these other theories were supported by a preponderance of weight which shows them to be the most fundamental ones of his belief. He would be inconsistent in excusing Catherine's war with Turkey as the lesser of two evils, the greater being the tyranny prevalent in that country, for he frequently had
said that war was the greatest of all evils. In his article on "War", in the Dictionnaire Philosophique, he makes no exceptions for justifiable wars. Chiefly he attacks wars for trivial causes, fought often by men who do not know why or for what they are fighting. Of the three greatest scourges of the earth, war, famine and pestilence, he places war as the greatest, for it is invariably accompanied by the other two. In this article he calls war "cette entreprise infernal", and "cette rage universale qui désole le monde". He says, "All the vices of all ages and all places together will never equal the evils produced by a single campaign". Inconsistently with this, which is indisputably his sober conviction, he urges Catherine on to greater conquests, saying in one letter to her, "You will not limit yourself doubtless to a defensive war. I hope that Moustapha will be beaten by land and by sea". He had written in the article on "War", "Natural religion has thousands of times prevented citizens from committing crime --- But artificial religion encourages all the cruelties which are committed in partnership, conspiracies, seditions, brigandage, ambuscades, surprises of cities, pillages, murders. Each marches gaily to the crime under the banner of his saint". Yet he welcomes Catherine's letters which brought him a softened recital of just such events from her own campaigns. One of her letters says, "My soldiers go to the war against the Turks as if they were going to a wedding feast." It is an image almost identical with that presented in Voltaire's own phrase, "each marches gayly to the crime," yet he applaudes it
enthusiastically. Voltaire had called the crusades ridiculous and had said that for a nuncio of the pope to have stirred up the war then being carried on was "worthy of Italian farce." In the same letter he added, "There is in that a mixture of horror and extravagance which nothing can approach; I do not understand anything about politics but I suspect however that among these folies there are some people who have great designs". This was merely a suspicion for he shows no signs of ever having gained a clear understanding of such matters. His inconsistency in this particular case however, does not mean that his opinions on the subject of war were at all indefinite. His statement of these opinions in writings other than his letters, is the true expression of what he firmly believed. His stories of Zadig, Micromegas and others satirize the uselessness of war and throughout his works a reader finds such statements as this one from "Le Philosophe Ignorant" which says, "The greatest of crimes, at least the most destructive and consequently that most opposed to the purposes of nature, is war". This Voltaire sincerely believed and preached. But Catherine wrote to him, "I would have lived a hundred years in peace and I would never have commenced the war, but since I am obliged to make war, thanks to the care of my enemies and my enviers, I will certainly neglect nothing to come out of it well."

Voltaire took this at its face value or, out of enthusiasm for the empress, pretended to do so.

The matter of religion is ever an important one in
any discussion of Voltaire, but in his correspondence with Catherine it receives a smaller amount of consideration than in most of his other writings. This may be due in part to the fact that it was never an important factor in their relations, their general correspondence never bringing up a religious point for discussion. Catherine's position as the head of the Greek Church would not have restrained Voltaire. Lack of attention to this subject is not to be accounted for by a fear on Voltaire's part of offending her personal faith in any creed. She makes no mention of any such faith and even had she done so, it is highly improbable that she would have taken offense at any remarks which Voltaire had permitted himself to make concerning it. A more probable explanation of the absence of much discussion of religion is the lack of interest in the subject for Catherine. Nothing held greater interest for Voltaire himself. But he was keenly desirous of pleasing his royal correspondent and to have filled his letters with this subject would have been to bore her extremely. Her own mention of her religion and her church is limited to an explanation to Voltaire, who was misinformed, of the ceremony of baptism in the Greek Church. On the other hand, though Voltaire does avoid any wearying treatment of the subject, still he does say clearly what he intends, generally in short, pithy statements which he interpolates into his letters unexpectedly. "It is true that your Majesty has two great enemies, the pope and the padisha of the Turks". "Your old chevalier (i.e.V) understands Madame, that there are among the
the confederates of Poland, some fanatics bewitched by monks". Or again - "The crusades were very ridiculous, but that a nuncio of the pope should have made the Grand Turk undertake a crusade against you, that is worthy of Italian farce." Not Moustapha, the Sultan of Turkey, whom Voltaire pretended to hate, whom he curses and scorns in his letters to Catherine, he calls "Moustapha, the worthy ally of the pope". In a later letter he mixes a thrust at religion into a clever flattery when he says, "I should like at least to have contributed to the killing of a few Turks for you (his war- chariot suggestion had failed); they say that for a Christian, that is a work very pleasing to God. It does not coincide well with my maxims of tolerance, but man is made up of inconsistencies, and besides, your Majesty turns my head. These remarks are common enough. It is difficult to select any work of Voltaire and not come upon some such observations at every page. A more unusual one is found in an exhortation to Catherine not to be too quick or too lenient in making peace with the Turk. He uses the expression "au nom de Jesus-Christ notre sauveur." This is a rare expression in Voltaire but has probably no religious significance. Of course Voltaire did not believe that Christ was the savior; he used the expression merely for emphasis. More characteristic is the following; "I admit to your Majesty that I detest the papal government; I consider it ridiculous and abominable; during too many centuries it has brutalized and drenched in blood, half of Europe."
horrors he mentions. He had seen the results of super-
stition and persecution, and his indignation and his
accusations against the movers of such abuses were just.
Religious intolerance was not a subject on which he derived
his information through uncertain sources. He said, "Not to
be able to enjoy the rights of citizenship because one believes
that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father, seems to
me so mad and so foolish that I would not believe this
absurdity if those of my own country had not prepared me for
it." Another later letter gives his opinion less directly.
Voltaire makes use of it in flattery. "When one deceives men
it is necessary to deceive them for a long time as they do at
Rome ------ I am at your feet. I kiss them much more respect-
fully than those of the pope; he believes himself the first
personage of the world; Moustapha believes him so also, but
I know well to whom this title is due." And again he says,
"There have been it is said, people who have founded religions
without being able even to sign their own names. That is not
to the honor of human nature. ------ I beg of you Madame,
to insert in your code, a positive law which will allow
priests to have their hands kissed only by their mistresses.
It is true that Jesus Christ allowed Mary Magdalene to kiss
his feet, but neither our priests nor yours have anything
in common with Jesus Christ." This was one of Voltaire's
loudest cries against the church - that it had been founded
in ignorance and was supported now by the ignorance of its
masses, duped by the craft of its leaders. At this time
Catherine was inclined toward tolerance of all kinds and Voltaire's influence and weight with her were at their greatest. She cared little what he might say to her, unorthodox as it might be, for her personal religious scruples were not easily offended. This Voltaire clearly perceived. He once wrote to her, "I would detest even the Greek religion if your Imperial Majesty were not at the head of that church." Actually, Voltaire knew nothing at all about the Greek Church and, except that he classed it with all other Catholic churches, was in no position to form a judgment upon it. He did know however, that Catherine's position at the head of it meant nothing to her. She had shown by her life and in her letters, what her religious principles were, and Voltaire read the nature of his correspondent easily. Her very correspondence with him, her reading and her admiration for his works and for him, made it certain that she was not a religious bigot. He knew how far he might venture in his attacks upon the church and knew how cleverly to weave them in with flattery and with remarks about other subjects of more importance and more interest to the Empress. In urging Catherine on to victory he would say, "In the name of God beat the Turks in spite of the nuncios of the pope in Poland, who is so well agreed with them." He expressed himself characteristically when it occurred to him to write, "I willingly abandon Jerusalem to the Musulmans, these barbarians are made for the country of Ezekial, Elias, and Caiaphas," these being characters of
whom he made great use in his writings against the Bible. Altogether in his correspondence with Catherine, he is comparatively brief in his attacks upon the church, but the forcefulness of his cry against the church in no wise suffered from this brevity. In the few passages quoted he gives a sufficiently clear and complete summary of his attitude toward the church and its methods. No disrespect for divine authority finds a place here, but a hatred and vitriolic scorn for church ritualism, fakery, superstition and intolerance is presented openly -

During the first few years of the correspondence between Catherine II and Voltaire the war and its progress did not assume so important a part in their letters as it came to take later. No one could accurately predict what was to be either the duration or the outcome of it. It is true that Voltaire ventured prophecies in nearly every letter, declaring that in a few months he would come to visit his Empress at her new capitol Constantinople. But the prophecies were received just as they were sent, in an optimistic spirit of flattery. Before the war came to be so all-absorbing to Russia, and therefore of such import to Catherine, she took an enthusiastic interest in reform of all kinds. This interest was that of an amateur and therefore did not always bring about results that left nothing to be desired. But it is of interest here for the part, small as it is, which Voltaire played in it.
With her first reform he had nothing to do. She demonstrated an executive ability and a remarkable strength of purpose by her introduction of inoculation for smallpox into Russia. Some such measure was urgently necessary. The ravages of the disease had been frightful. Obtaining the services of an English physician then practising in Vienna she gave the example to her court and to her nation by being herself the first to be vaccinated. She said in December 1768 that in Saint Petersburg more people were inoculated in one month than in Vienna in eight. Thus she demonstrated her popularizing ability. The same letter contains a mention of "Instructions for a New Code of Laws" which was to have a place in their letters for the succeeding ten years. The first mention of the Instructions had been in Catherine's letter of June 29 (July 9) 1766. She had included in her letter the following extract from the instructions "Dans un grand empire qui étend sa domination sur autant de peuples divers qu'il y a de différentes croyances parmi les hommes, la faute la plus nuisible au repos et à la tranquillité de ses citoyens serait l'intolerance de leurs différentes religions. Il n'y a mene qu'une sage tolérance également avouée de la religion orthodoxe et de la politique qui puisse ra meuer toutes ces brebis égarées: 'à la vraie croyance. La persécution irrité les esprits; la tolerance les adoucit et les rend moins obstinés en étouffant ces disputes contraires au repos de l'État et à l' union des citoyens." This is an idea in which Catherine firmly and sincerely believed at this time. Work on
the laws was to have commenced immediately. The letter in
which a complete translation of the instructions was sent
to Voltaire is missing, but in answer to it he writes, "I
read the preliminary instruction which your Majesty was kind
enough to send me. Lycurgus and Solon would have signed
your work though they, themselves, would not have been able
to make it. It is clear, precise, equitable, firm and humane.
Legislators have the first place in the temple of glory.
Conquerors come after them". In July of the following year
the war had taken on greater proportions than had been ex­
pected. Catherine's letter at the time says, "Our laws go
on as usual, we are working at them gradually. It is true
that they are become secondary affairs, but they will lose
nothing from that. These laws will be tolerant, they will
not persecute, kill or burn anyone. God guard us from an
event like that of the Chevalier de la Barre". Here we see
Voltaire in the reform to be brought about by the new laws.
Catherine had declared in the beginning of her correspondence
with Voltaire, that he had taught her to think; that what
she was came from him. It is indisputable that she did
derive ideas of tolerance from the Philosopher of Ferney.
Coincidence may account in a large measure for the fact
that during her most intimate relations with him her
tolerance was greatest, her purpose most philanthropic, and
her ambitions for her adopted nation less mixed with a
thirst for personal advancement. The prevailing spirit of
flattery which made the courtier's life not only a profession
but a game, and one at which Voltaire excelled all others, may account for the persistency with which he urged the empress on to the completion of the code of laws which the Turkish war had delayed. But who can doubt that some disinterested desire for the good of humanity had its place in this flattery and this urgency? True - Voltaire greatly exaggerated the importance of the Code and the influence it was to have in the future world of government and law. But such exaggeration was typical of contemporary spirit. In this case its effects were practically negligible during several years. Russia could not, as Catherine declared it could, carry on its regular routine of interior development without feeling the effects of so great a war. Work on the Code was necessarily slow. At least however, Voltaire never lost sight of it, never failed for any great length of time to include in his letters, some mention of it and some hope that it would soon resume its proper place in the important business of the government. It is too much to say that he gained his point by dint of persistance. The Code would have been finished had there never been a Voltaire. But still the psychological effects of constant repetition must be admitted. It is noteworthy that in the last letter of the correspondence, Voltaire acknowledges the receipt of a German translation of the Code of Laws, the Instruction for which Catherine had sent him ten years before. And his enthusiasm had only increased in this time. He elaborately predicts its world-wide effects.

Voltaire, himself, had been a great worker for
reform in his own country, if not by pointing out better
methods, at least by showing the evils of the old. Strangely
enough, most reforms which have any place in discussion in
his correspondence with Catherine, have their original
mention in her letters. She throws out several suggestions
to him, not all of which receive attention. The letter of
July, 1769 contains this; "The bad opinion which you have of
most universities confirms the opinion which I had of them.
They were all founded in very unphilosophical times;
I believe that in most of them routine serves for rule; people
learn there for the sake of learning, but they do not take
the trouble to separate truth from its mixture with error,
nor the things worth being retained from the trivialities.
A work worthy of a man of genius and of philosophical mind
would be to prescribe a reform upon which could be modelled
the schools to be established in the future. I should be
the first to follow the good example." This looks like a
direct invitation or challenge to Voltaire to deal with the
necessities of the situation and to solve the problem. If
he himself considered it as such he ignored it. The letter
in which he had originally stated his opinion of the uni-
versities is lost, and the letters which follow do not refer
to them again. There is further discussion of education
however. Catherine came to Voltaire for advice in a problem
of selecting plays to be presented by girls in a school
of which she was an actively interested patroness. She had
founded a house of education for foundlings in which nearly
40,000 children were received during her reign alone.
Plays which should not be objectionable for strong elements of passion, or which, on that account, were unsuitable for the education of young girls, were difficult to find in either the French or Russian drama. This was a more attractive subject to Voltaire than that of the universities had been. His interest was spontaneous and immediate. "Declamation, tragic or comic," he wrote, "seems to me an excellent education which gives grace to the mind and to the body, which cultivates the voice, the address, and the taste; one retains a hundred passages which one quotes apropos. That diffuses pleasure in society." He followed his opinions by an offer, gladly accepted by Catherine, to expurgate and rearrange several plays of Molibare for the use of the novices. But ill-health and an unwonted procrastination delayed this work in spite of repeated requests from Catherine and the correspondence does not show that it was ever done. Voltaire had expressed a hope that these girls, five hundred in all, were not destined to the church. Catherine reassured him by saying that, although they were in a church school, she did not intend to make nuns of them. She raised them on the contrary, to be the delights of their families, to be neither prudes nor coquettes, but kindly girls, who would know how to raise children of their own and to care for their own households. So here too she indirectly shows an effect of Voltaire's influence by conforming with his ideas on the purposes of education. Her zeal for reforms of all kinds was not a permanent one. It flagged and finally died.
out altogether, but this happened after the close of the period covered by her correspondence with Voltaire. While it lasted however her ideas were practical ones and tended toward permanent improvements. Rather an impulsive enthusiasm, than an inborn characteristic of her nature, Catherine's eagerness for reform did do much genuine and lasting good. In a summary of the point of Voltaire's influence upon Catherine it would be difficult to state definitely the specific influence or influences which resulted from their correspondence. Perhaps Catherine herself could not have done this. She proves the influence conclusively enough when she calls herself his disciple. All critics admit that Catherine's general viewpoint was, in the whole, early part of her reign, very largely determined by her reading of French philosophers. And of these, Voltaire was her favorite.

Among the subjects frequently discussed in this correspondence, that of Voltaire's visit to Catherine's court is of sufficient interest to deserve mention here. The very extraordinary relations and the friendship which was established between these two persons is remarkable when it is considered that they never saw each other. Catherine had in her library a bust of Voltaire and late in his life he had sent her a portrait painted by an artist visiting at Ferney. He possessed a portrait of her which he called a shrine and which he sought to crown with laurel but could not for as he said, Naturalists declared that it was to be found
growing only in Russia. These resemblances constituted their only visual images of each other. Even at the time when their correspondence began Voltaire was an old man. He was ill, always with one foot in the grave, and always with only "Two days to live". A trip to the court of Russia would have been too great a drain on his vitality, always at a low ebb, but wonderfully persistent. Years before he had forsworn the life of the courtier.

That at Berlin had been a bitter experience but now a new opportunity presented itself. A chance for self-respecting independence and consideration yet surrounded by charm and brilliancy of court life was an attractive prospect. He would be the friend of royalty, would enjoy distinctive favor and would give in return the delights of his conversation. Some such thoughts must have passed through his mind and no little disappointment must have followed the failure of their realization. He was not resigned to never seeing the empress until the last few years of his life. In July, 1765, he wrote to her, "If I were not so old as I am I should ask your Majesty's permission to attend the first tournament ever seen in your climate". This was early in the correspondence. Two months later, in answer to a letter which regrets his inability to attend the fête he speaks further of his age but adds, "However, I think that I would take the liberty of coming to pay my court to this astonishing bee (from a flattering poem in which he has represented her as a bee, after that emblem on her coat of arms) which
governs this vast hive, if the maladies which afflict me permitted me, - poor drone that I am - to go out of my cell----
I have never so keenly felt the chagrin of being unable to travel." The sharp old man realized the flattery to Catherine in his eagerness to visit her and this doubtless had some part in his constant repetition of it. After speaking of her as a saint he wrote,"If you wish to perform miracles, try only to render your climate a little warmer". When she has done that he will ask permission to come to finish his life there. The shortest letter of the correspondence, Jan. 29, 1768, seems to have reference to this subject. In full it is, -"Madame, they say that an old man named Simeon, upon seeing a little child, cried out in his joy, 'I have only to die since I have seen my savior'. This Simeon was a prophet, he saw from afar, all that this little Jew was to do". Voltaire had several times called the empress Saint Catherine. This then may mean that he had only to see her, then die, for life held nothing greater for him. It is a very subtle flattery, hinting also as it does, at the great future which he presaged for her. Constantly one finds in his letters some such remark as,"Apollo presented the Tarter Abaris with an arrow which carried him from one end of the earth to the other, after the fashion of our sorcerers. If I had the arrow I would be today at Petersburg." His optimism as to Catherine's conquest of Constantinople is not all flattery and it was at the time when this seemed most probable that his hopes of seeing his empress were at their highest. He
wrote then, "I ask of Your Imperial Majesty, permission to come and place myself at your feet and to pass some days at your court as soon as it is established at Constantinople, for I think very seriously that if ever the Turks are to be driven from Europe it will be by the Russians." Constantinople was a more accessible goal at that time than St. Petersburg. Voltaire saw more probability of seeing Catherine there than in Russia. But campaign followed campaign, Constantinople was not taken and this hope began to dwindle. In a spirit of optimism concerning his health he wrote again of undertaking a visit to the capital, "I see Madame, that I will not be able to pay my court to your Majesty this year in the states of Moustapha, that worthy ally of the pope. I must postpone my trip until next year. I will be seventy-seven years old it is true, and I haven't the vigor of a Turk, but I do not see what is to prevent my coming in the milder season to greet the Star of the North and to Curse the Crescent. Our Mme. Geoffrin made the trip to Varsovie. Why should I not undertake that to St. Petersbourg in the month of April. I would arrive in June, I would return in September, and if I died on the way I would have placed upon my tomb the inscription, "Here lies the admirer of the august Catherine who had the honor of dying in going to present to her his profound respect." Thirty years before he had addressed the same compliment to Frederic II, but it loses none of its effectiveness on that account. And Catherine responded, "There could be nothing more flattering
to me than the trip which you propose to undertake to come


to see me; but monsieur, I should respond badly to the
friendship which you show me if I did not forget for the
moment, the personal satisfaction I would take in seeing you,
in order to think of the anxiety I experience in considering
this trip, so long and so difficult, to which you wish to ex­
pose yourself. Your health being so delicate, I admire your
courage; but I should be inconsolable if your health, unfortuna­
tely should be weakened by this trip, and I could never pardon
myself nor would Europe ever pardon me for it. If ever use
were made of the epitaph which you chose to compose, the
entire earth would reproach me for my complaisance." This does
not at first consideration, seem to ring true, yet it must
contain very much sincerity after all. Catherine is not
seeking a way out of an embarrassing situation. She need not
have been embarrassed at withdrawing an invitation extended
years before. Moreover, she would have taken genuine pleasure
in this visit herself. Diderot, Grimm and D'Alambert had
been guests at her court, and her accounts of the pleasure
of their society can not be accused of insincerity. If
primarily her correspondence with Voltaire had begun with
an ulterior motive, at least it had developed in her sufficient
respect and consideration to make her genuinely value his
well-being. There seems no reason to refuse credence to
the reality of the sentiment expressed in this letter. But
it did . . . have the effect of considerably dampening Voltaire's
enthusiasm for the visit and the few mentions made of it later
in the letters take the form of regrets. He had lost all hope or notion of ever seeing Catherine.

Another subject which finds frequent mention in this correspondence is perhaps of greater significance as regards portrayal of character and has certainly more importance in its practical results. Several citations have already been made of cases in which Catherine asks some favor from Voltaire, examples of his writings or advice on some problem of literary selection. But the balance of indebtedness weighs more heavily upon the other side in the matter of actual, practical benefits. Efforts to belittle Catherine's philanthropy by attributing to it, motives of political advantage, have in their exaggerations, gone far afield from the chief point to be found in discussing these benefits, examples of which are so numerous. If Catherine gave foresightedly, at least she gave with sincere generosity and she gave without ostentation. The practical good which her giving accomplished is indisputable. To revert again to the theory that Catherine was exploiting the Encyclopædists for the notoriety which association with these men gave to her projects, whether or not this hypothesis is founded on fact, Voltaire realized in one respect the nature of his relations with her. Consciously or unconsciously, he appreciated the fact that Catherine was receiving the best which the literary world of her time had to offer in her correspondence with him. There was a reciprocal obligation.
Catherine's response to it was the only one which it was possible for her to make, a practical one. At first it came hesitatingly, as did Voltaire's offerings. One of the first examples of it is a contribution toward the assistance of the Sirven family. Extracts from the letters concerning it are given rather fully to show the attitude of each of the persons involved and because they serve to give a clear idea of the spirit of the request and the response. In June 1766 Voltaire wrote, "There is perhaps some indiscretion in daring to employ the protection of Your Majesty for the Sirvens after the bounties with which you have overwhelmed the Calas family. I know all the great and useful things which your Majesty does for your people. It would be to render oneself guilty of a fault toward them to beg you to turn aside for an unhappy family of Languedoc a part of the stream of benefits which you are pouring over Russia. I take the liberty of writing you Madame, only in order to beg you to moderate your favors. The least assistance will suffice for us. We ask only the honor of placing your august name at the lead of those who help us to crush out fanaticism, and to render men more tolerant and more humane."

"The response from the empress was prompt. The writer considers it only just to regard this letter as typical of the benevolent side of Catherine's character. "Monsieur, the Star of the North is only an aurora-borealis; its benefits scattered over some hundreds of leagues, of which it pleases you to make mention, do not belong to me; the Calas family
owes what it has received to its friends; M. Diderot, the
sale of his library to his, just as the Calas and the
Sirvens owe all to you. It is nothing to give to one's
neighbors a little of that which one has in abundance, but
one gains for himself immortality in being the advocate of
humanity, the defender of oppressed innocence-------------.
You desire Monsieur, a modest help for the Sirvens; can I
refuse it? Will you praise me for this action? Is there
any reason why you should? In this connection I may say
that I should prefer that you do not make known my bill of
exchange. If however, you think that my name, inharmonious
as it is, may do any good to these victims of the spirit of
persecution, I rely upon your judgment and you may name me
only provided that that will not injure them. I have my
reasons for believing that it might do so."

This was the beginning. Voltaire began to realize
that he had only to mention his wants, not to ask, and the
favor whatever it might be, was granted. Let it be said at
once that few of these favors were to benefit him personally
and that his influence was directed to the service of others
almost exclusively. That which was perhaps closest to him
was Catherine's interest in his watch factory. This too, was
a project to promote the interests of his workmen by promot­
ing those of his factory. He found that a mere announcement
of the fact that he had established a watch factory at Ferney
to give employment to the refugees from Geneva, formerly em­
ployed in that trade, was sufficient to draw from Catherine
an offer to purchase all the watches that might be sent to
her. Here a mistake occurred which must not be attributed
to Voltaire. He had directed his workmen to send the
empress a certain number of watches and they sent twice as
many as he had given them orders to send. But in acknowledging
the mistake to Catherine he showed his shrewdness as a business-
man. He urged her to make use of only such a number as she
should want for gifts or other purposes, and to turn the re-
mainder over to the merchants of St. Petersbourg who could sell
them at an enormous profit. At the same time he asked her help
in establishing a commerce through Russia which would give him
a market for his wares in China. In response to this Catherine
informed him of similar attempts which had been made unsuccess-
fully prior to this time, but said that she was investigating
the tariffs and intended such a revision of them as should
encourage exports and imports. Nothing came of the attempt to
establish a commerce with China however, at least through the
cooperation of Russia. This transaction of the watches might
easily have turned out an unfortunate one. Voltaire after
urging Catherine to pay for the watches at her own convenience
told her after the payment was made that it was some two-
hundred rubles short of the correct amount; due of course to
a mistake of his workmen in sending the bill.

Saint Beuve in his "Portraits" says, "Voltaire seems
to me, judging from his letters, to have busied himself act-
ively during the last years of his life, with the public wel-
fare of the region about him, and also with the private inter-
est that, from far and near, appealed to him for help."
Confirmation of this is prominent in his letters with Catherine. The cases of the Calas family, the Sirvens and the watch factory, had more personal interest to Voltaire. They differed also from the cases which are to follow in that they sought financial aid and the advantage which the use of the empress' name as a support would produce. In the majority of the other cases, however, Voltaire served merely to introduce to Catherine persons who had favors to ask. He not only derived no returns except the gratitude of his protegés, but he risked incurring the displeasure of the empress whom he so frequently importuned, as will be shown later. He came to be considered an infallible agent for obtaining access to the ear and to the favor of the empress and many sought from him an introduction which was considered a guarantee of fortune made. He found it difficult to refuse and consequently made several recommendations of undeserving persons. These cases were exceptional however. The first person he recommended was a young Swiss, Galatin by name, for whom he sought a place in a Russian university which should prepare him for Russian citizenship and the service of the empress. The letter from Catherine accepting the "new citizen" that Voltaire sent her is lost, but later letters show that the request had been granted. In August 1772 he wrote to Catherine, "Madame, it is not surprising that so many officers of other sovereigns wish to be yours, and that they should press forward eagerly to serve one who is so admired in Europe and in Asia. More than twenty young men,
having heard that your Imperial Majesty deigned to honor me with some kindness, have asked me for letters of recommendation. I was not bold enough to dare to take this liberty. I refused, moreover, especially because I did not know absolutely that these young men were worthy to enter into the service of your Imperial Majesty." This serves as a prologue to the recommendation of a young man of whose merits Voltaire is sure, the Baron de Pellemberg. Four days later he wrote another letter for which Pellemberg himself was the courier. This letter Catherine received but in answer to it she says she has not yet seen Baron Pellemberg and that when she has she will inform Voltaire. The last mention of him is in a letter written in December of the same year. "Being born too soon and not being able to witness all that my great empress does, I have seized upon the chance of sending her this young Baron Pellemberg who is a third German, a third Flemish and a third Spanish (by military affiliations with these nations) and who wishes to change these thirds into a Russian whole. I know him, madame, only by his enthusiasm for you. I saw him only in passing; he asked me for a letter. I took the liberty of giving him one, as I will give them if you permit, to whomsoever wishes to make the pilgrimage to St. Petersbourg out of pure devotion to Saint Catherine II. Without this permission he had already sent several pilgrims to Russia. A request made just before this letter was written had been of a slightly different nature.
He solicited Catherine's patronage for a young scientist, a physicist, half French, half Swiss, like himself. He had made extended studies concerning ice and Voltaire sought for him an Associate Membership in the Russian Academy of Science. After the request he added, "I humbly ask pardon for my boldness; for a long time your indulgence has accustomed me to much liberties." Before he had received any reply to this request he repeated it in a letter of January 3, 1773, which he concludes by saying, "This engineer, named Aubry, moreover, will die of jaundice if he is not associated with the Academy; an honor which I have had for several years; whose protection could I employ if not our sovereigns?" Catherine not only exerted her influence in this matter, but also spent no little time in fully investigating the point under discussion. But in this instance she was obliged to refuse Voltaire's request because of an unfavorable decision of the Academy itself. Like Voltaire's other proteges, the Spartans, Aubry had to be left to work out his own salvation. The following year Voltaire again wished to gain by his influence with the empress, a favor for a Russian who came to him with a pitiful story. He wished a safe-conduct for two years. Later the request drew from Catherine an explanation of its having been refused for Voltaire had been imposed upon by an escaped convict and thief. He said in answer to this, "I was an imbecile to allow myself to be seduced by his moon-face".

But the advocate of the human race was irrepresible.
Not at all dampened by the refusal he continued to recommend. A letter concerning a lawyer who wished to help draw up the Russian laws was lost. An engineer and mathematician who thought himself able to contribute toward the plans for the seige of Constantinople, should such a contingency ever arise, was sure of Voltaire's endorsement. This man received his employment. Catherine wrote, "Your recommendation caused him to be received into my service as you desired, although the war is finished." Catherine had never seriously considered the seige of Constantinople and had always taken Voltaire's enthusiasm on this point with good humor. This letter may then, contain one last laugh at the hope which he never outgrew. The laugh is a kindly one however. But neither failure nor laughter prevent repetition. The next three letters from Voltaire each contain a recommendation of men for the positions of Russian consul in Cadiz, Marseilles, and Lyons. Here the correspondence ends. Six letters follow the one written in February, 1775, but Voltaire asks no more favors. This is somewhat noticable as few of the letters which immediately precede this one, are without requests for some concession to him or to some protégé of his. The last of this letter gives the reason for the change. Voltaire wrote, "All who enter my house and who see your protrait, imagine that I have great credit at your court. They say to me," 'Make us consuls of this empress who ought to be sovereign of all the world, but who possesses only about a quarter of it'. I try to repress their ambition: I would do better
Madame, to repress my garrulity. I feel that I am annoying the conqueress, legislatrix, and benefactress; it is permitted to me to adore her, but not to annoy her to this excess. I must put limits to my ardor; I must limit myself in spite of myself, to a profound respect." That is all. After that he did no limit himself. He suspected, and perhaps rightly, that he was wearying the empress with his importunities. Their interchange of favors was as near a balanced one as was possible. It had included books, translations, codes, nuts and plants from Siberia, advice, paintings, portraits, watches and other jewelry, favors and employment of friends, And if it had its last life in this letter, it had existed practically as long as the correspondence itself. Catherine's benevolence, however outlasted any interested cause which may have contributed to her generosity. This quality manifested itself after Voltaire's death in a pension of 1500 francs per annum to Wagnière, his secretary, and a regal gift of furs and jewels to Mme. Denis, his niece.

After a discussion of the subject matter of this correspondence a discussion of the character of it must be largely an interpretation of what has proceeded. Consequently some necessary repetitions occur, particularly repetitions of quotations or examples which serve best to illustrate that which has gone before. In treating and endeavoring to interpret the character of the letters there is a question as to the importance of the element of flattery so prominent in the correspondence. Did the familiarity and intimacy of the
relations of Catherine the Great and Voltaire proceed from this element of flattery or was this element the out-growth of the very personal tone of their letters? It would seem that neither of these possibilities serves as the true solution. Flattery and its resulting manners of expression were the product of the century in which these persons lived. Their age followed closely that of the greatest polish, the most elaborate development of politeness which the world had ever known, the height of which development was reached under Louis XIV. It is to serve as the explanation for the tendency of social relationships in the following century. More than any other nation the French were imbued with it. It so thoroughly dominated the life of the people that everything - government, business, family, was made subordinate to the decrees of this the most powerful of all fashions. And fashion became stronger than simply a mode. Its influence was not transient. It had gone so deeply into the character of the nation that it survived all changes coming with time until the shock of the revolution. Taine, in a chapter on Les Moeurs et Les Caracters in "L'Ancien Regime", gives an excellent picture of the century. A few quotations from that book will serve to present the France of that day in a clear light. He says, "Les plus graves événements ne sont que des matières à bons mots." "L'État n'était presque rien et la société était presque tout." In one place he quotes from Voltaire himself, from the "Princesse de Babylone" and says,
"Society would say almost in the tone of Voltaire, half earnest, half jest, 'that the gods have established kings only to give fêtes every day provided that they be diversified, that life is too short to make any other use of it; that trials, intrigues, war, disputes between priests which consume human life, are absurd and horrible things, that man is born only for joy', and that among necessary things, 'the superfluous must be put in the first rank.' Taine quotes further from Voltaire's "Princesse de Babylone", "Nothing is comparable to the pleasant life led there in the midst of arts and of a tranquil and delicate 'volupté,' strangers, kings even, have preferred this repose so enchanting and so agreeably occupied, to their nations and to their thrones." 'It was the period of the life of the salons. Voltaire himself had experienced that in his youth. "The pleasure was that of living with people perfectly polite", says Taine, "but with women especially, it is little enough to be polished, one must be gallant." He speaks of truths enclosed in polished phrases like "a drop of acid in a bonbon." During the first three quarters of the eighteenth century then, the effects of the preceding one were still making themselves forcibly felt. Voltaire served as a link to bind the two together. It was during this same period that he wrote his letters and he was not immune to the contagion of fashion. On the contrary, he more than any other served to spread it. Catherine acknowledges him as the father of her own tastes in literature. This is as far as this work needs to trace
the effects of the dominant trait of the age. It had
effected Voltaire, he had transmitted it to the empress
of Russia; the brilliancy of these two correspondents
was such as to render their letters characteristic of this
age in its best expression. Flattery then, is an accepted
feature of the correspondence. Its origin is evident and
it may here give precedence in importance to the intimacy
and familiarity of the letters in which it exists. The
point of flattery then, will be more fully considered and
illustrated later. This familiarity is more difficult
of description perhaps than the other characteristics of
the letters. It seldom reaches a close degree of personal
intimacy. It is rather an intimacy or familiarity permitted
by each to the other in matters which may be called external.
It did not come altogether spontaneously, yet it was of
rapid development and to give it its proper place in this
article, tracing its growth minutely would scarcely be worth
while. Examples and quotations therefore are taken at rather
long intervals. Further reason for this lies in the fact
that, though not existing in the first letters, this intimacy
was insensibly developed into the letters without the trans-
ition from formality being strongly marked. Two strong
matures came together and a very natural bond of sympathy
was quickly established.

It has been already mentioned that the first
advances in this correspondence probably came from Catherine.
Her first letters are written as though to a third person
for whom Voltaire served as a receiver. They are very formal.
Voilaire, for reasons of personal safety, had written articles under the name of the Nephew of the Abbé Bazin, and these articles had won the admiration of the empress. Knowing their origin she had written to Voilaire, asking that he forward or communicate her messages to the nephew. This cloak served for the first interchange of letters but was soon abandoned. It had allowed Catherine to flatter and enter more easily into familiarity with Voilaire. In an early letter to him she wrote, "You may be assured that you share with your nephew my esteem, and that all I say for him is equally for you too". Voilaire was not reticent to such overtures and soon wrote to her (Sept. 1765) a much more familiar letter. "Would I dare, Madame, to say that I am a little sorry that you call yourself Catherine? The heroines of former times did not take the names of saints; Homer or Virgil would have been very much embarrassed with those names. You were not made for the Calendar." He escapes the charge of impertinence through graceful expression. Indeed, it is only this charm which permitted much of what he ventured to say to go unresented. For whatever reason it was allowed his candor is a truthful resumé of the situation existing when he wrote in Feb. 1769; "Madame, I am an old invalid of seventy-five. I am in my dotage perhaps, but at least I tell you what I think and that is rather rare when one talks to persons of your rank. La majesté imperiale disparait sur mon papier devant la personne. Mon enthousiasme l'emporte sur mon profond respect". A letter of the following year contains the sentence, "Vous êtes devenue ma passion dominante." Of course such an expression should not
be interpreted in the light of its modern meaning, but neither
should it be entirely explained or accounted for by declaring
it an example of the elaborate politeness of the century. Such
an expression might well be taken to exceed the dictates of
even that age's fashion, especially so when written to an
empress. It is an example of the familiarity to which he was
admitted. Still another side, a more practical side of the
familiarity was the privilege he felt of asking for information
as he has asked for favors, which would have been denied another.
In August 1772, he wrote, "I take the liberty of asking if it
is true that there is in Siberia, a kind of heron, all white,
except that the wings and tail are flame coloured; and expecially if it is true that by the peace of Pruth, Peter the Great was
obliged to send every year, one of these birds with a collar of
diamonds to the Ottoman Port.------Your extreme indulgence has
acquainted me to the boldness of questioning an empress: that
is not ordinary; but, in truth there is nothing in the entire
world so extraordinary as Your Majesty." This was a liberty
and boldness, indeed, even from Voltaire, but one in which he
managed always to acquit himself well by means of his inimitable
style. In another letter he excuses himself by saying, "Pardon
me, Madame, for these remarks, but you have designed to accustom
me to saying what I think and everything is pardoned to great
passions." Not all of the familiarity however, came from
Voltaire, Without ever descending from her throne, Catherine
raised the philosopher to a level plane with herself and
wrote, "If men could ever become wise, long ago you would have rendered them so. Oh! how I love your writings." Many other
examples of this sort are to be found in her letters but it is natural that her expressions should be more guarded and somewhat less enthusiastic and impulsive than those of her admirer. Generally she responds to his advances, now that their friendship is well established. As a final example of the intimacy and familiarity with which they corresponded quotations are here selected from Voltaire's letters of the 9th of August 1774, and from Catherine's response, dated August 13, 24, of the same year. Voltaire had not received any word from the empress for sometime and wrote complainingly, "Madame, I am positively in disgrace at your court. Your Imperial Majesty has supplanted me there for Diderot, or for Grimm, or for some other favorite; you have had no regard for my old age. That would be understood if your Majesty were a French coquette, but how can a victorious empress and legislatrice be so inconstant? For you I have embroiled myself with the Turks and still worse, with M. Le Marquis Pugatschew, and your forgetfulness is the recompense which I receive for it. Well, that is done, and I shall never in my life love another empress. I imagine however, that I may have deserved my disgrace (having importuned her too frequently with recommendations). Finally I search myself for crimes to justify your indifference. I see clearly that there is no passion which is unending. This thought would make me die of vexation, were I not so near death from old age. May your Majesty deign then to receive this letter as my last will and testament. Signed: your admirer, your forsaken one, your old Russian of Ferney." Catherine's response is in the same vein.
"Monsieur, although very pleasantly you pretend to be in
disgrace at my court, I assume you that you are not; I have
supplanted you neither for Diderot, nor for Grimm, nor for
any other such favorite. I still revere you as I have always
done in the past; and whatever they may tell you, on my
honor, I am neither fickle nor inconstant." She explains the
long interval between her letters and continues, "But, in
truth, Monsieur, I would have great cause to complain of the
declarations of the extinction of your passion which you
make, if I did not see through your vexation, the interest
with which friendship still inspires you for me. Live,
Monsieur, and let us be reconciled; for indeed there is noth­
ing for us to quarrel about; I hope that you will retract,
by a codicil in my favor, that pretended will which would
desolate me if I were not sustained by the hope of your return
to me. You are so good a Russian that you would not know how
to be the enemy of Catherine."

Another expression of this character of their letters
is to be found in the different sobriquets which each applies
to the other. Catherine is here, too, more formal. Her
favorite name for Voltaire is "L'Avocat du Genre Humain."
Voltaire himself, is more original and versatile and uses
whatever fits best into the particular glory in which he
happens to be depicting his empress. Now it is L'Étoile du
Nord", and he frequently reiterates that "all light comes from
the North." This is when her law-making occupies his greatest
admiration. Later her benevolence calls forth praise in which
she is Saint Catherine. Her conquests and her justice entitle her to "La Semiramis du Nord" and to "Tomyris". But she declares that she has one other title that she prefers. In one letter she says, "Be assured, Monsieur, the affairs of your favorite (after what you say to me and the friendship which you never fail to show me, I take this title boldly) proceed in good order." Later she declares this to be the most prized of all her honors.

Few quotations can be taken from the letters exchanged by Catherine and Voltaire without including examples of the elaborate flattery each spent upon the other. Many of the extracts previously included in this thesis, give evidence of this. Therefore, the element of flattery, so noticable to the modern reader, should here be given some explanation and deserves some defense against the violent attacks which it has drawn upon Voltaire himself. When Voltaire is criticized and accused of insincerity and baseness for his flattery it is always for that which he directed to persons from whom he could expect some concessions, were they his object, and the critics entirely ignore the fact that he could and did lavish the same flattery upon other persons in cases which prove their own disinterestedness. These last cases need, then, no attention here. The Encyclopedica Britannica in the article on Catherine II, says, "Voltaire and the Encyclopedists with whom she corresponded and upon whom she preferred gifts and pensions, repaid her by the grossest flattery while doing their best to profit by
her generosity." Some refutation of this has already been given but one explanation remains. The highly developed fashion of elaborate courtesy and ceremony, made flattery a fine art. It was a study. It existed in everything.
The letters of Voltaire to Catherine are simply excellent specimens of it at its best. This element is so completely lacking in the matter-of-fact customs of the present day that it is difficult, especially for the modern Anglo-Saxon to realize that at one time it was a dominating quality not only of the literature, but of the entire life of the French Nation.
This elaborate courtesy, moreover, was by no means confined to France. "In Germany it was clumsy but elaborate as the ceremonials of the little courts still show, and it extended to England and America, where we prefer to call it the "old-fashioned dignity." In this then, as in much else, Voltaire represented not simply a nation but a century. The disinterestedness of his flattery is not the point here however, Catherine too, was not without her share of the prevailing tendency of the century. Her earliest letters to Voltaire are full of a flattery, seldom indeed as elaborate as that which she received, but after all there was in Catherine the empress who wrote. Tallentyre in his "Life of Voltaire", says, "Voltaire was the teacher and Catherine the greatest of queens and the cleverest of women, his humble pupil. In 1768 she had taken his advice, there is no subtler form of flattery—"She may or may not have been conscious of this. Certain it is that she was never sparing of complimentary phrases in her
letters to him. He, however, had several very clever manners of flattering the empress. His wit was not limited to simple praise of her beauty and of the works she accomplished. These were the commonplaces, the characteristic expressions of the prevailing fashion, to be found in any letters of the day. A subtler form was that by which Voltaire flattered Catherine in pretending that her victories and her glory were the means of keeping him alive and that the rumors of defeat of her troops were the cause of his ill-health. Reports from the Parisian papers of Russian losses in Turkey invariably caused a relapse from which he recovered immediately upon hearing from Catherine the true reports of her successes. He says, "My consolations are your victories and my fear is lest your Majesty make peace next winter;" and in another letter, "Madame, each letter with which your Majesty honors me, cures me of the fever which the news from Paris gives me-----Deign then Madame, to preserve for me this health which you have restored to me. An invalid must not be abandoned in his convalescence." And Catherine in the spirit of the conceit answers, "From the vivacity which reigns in your letter, I can not believe you really ill; one convinces oneself willingly of that which one wishes; I hope that this will find you completely recovered; if my successes can contribute to this end, you have in the past month, receiv-ed enough of this restorative medicine." A less worthy method of flattery sometimes employed by Voltaire was that of satirically contrasting the trivial activities and frivolities of Paris with the serious and important works of Russia. He says
in one letter, "I wish also, Madame, to boast to you of the exploits of my country." These, he tells, consist of a beautiful new dancer at the Opera - "They say she has very beautiful arms" - a trial trip of the French fleet, a review of a regiment, and a skirmish between a detachment of Jesuits and a corps of Jansenists. He finishes his letter with, "While we are doing such memorable things, your Majesty amuses herself in taking provinces, gaining control of the Black Sea, and fighting the Turkish armies. That is really to have nothing to do and only a small state to govern," This mockery of his own nation could be less flattering in the advantage with which it offset the greater undertaking of Russia than in the high esteem and respect which Voltaire intended to show for Catherine and her people.

A last point in connection with the character of these letters, a point in which the qualities to be discussed may be all included under the term "esprit", is much more difficult of adequate treatment here. It is one for which illustrations and examples that that will be suitable are extremely hard to select, for when a work shines with brilliancy throughout, it is difficult to designate which spots are the brightest. Nearly any letter given in full would serve as an example of the esprit of the collection as a whole in a very general way. But no one letter or no selection of a number of letters could serve to convey a clear idea of the infinite variety of their charm. This is to be had only in reading the letters as they stand, undimmed by translation and
uninterrupted in their succession. Still, translation and selection must serve here in whatever measure possible. George McLean Harper says, "Historical interest (in Voltaire's work) has superceded intrinsic interest". This is entirely in discord with all the well known critics but an acquaintance with Voltaire's letters alone and an appreciation of their esprit alone would be sufficient to refute this statement. However, the same writer says later in the same work that Voltaire "could breath freely in the atmosphere of thought", and that his is a language which will still be fresh and modern a thousand years hence." In this statement, inconsistent with the first one quoted, he seems to strike a real point of Voltaire's style. The freshness of this style will remain fresh; it is alert, clear, rapid. Voltaire's impulsive nature and his enthusiasm carry him along. His work never allows an impression of half interest for it is never done half-heartedly. Voltaire was always swept away by a passion and his language follows closely the current of his ideas. It was, in fact, "marvelously adapted to the expression of ideas", especially of his own ideas. Yet never studied or weighty, it is not so hurried as ever to lose exactness. He may truly be said to have had a gift for satire and for irony that made his attacks with these weapons irresistible. They have little place as such in these letters, however. A prominent quality of their esprit is their wit and cleverness. Examples are abundant. He has infinite variety in the conclusions of his letters.
In one he will speak of the arrow of Abaris which carries its owner from place to place at his command, and he says, "If I had this arrow I would be today in St Petersbourg instead of presenting foolishly from the foot of the Alps, my profound respect and my inviolable attachment to the sovereign of Azof, of Caffa, and of my heart." Again he says, "I place myself at your victorious feet, whiter than those of Moustapha, with the most profound respect and the greatest passion." By an inversion of address, one letter speaks to Moustapha, the Sultan of Turkey. Voltaire tells him what an idiot he was to think of fighting against the beautiful empress; that if his fleet is not yet destroyed, "What is deferred is not lost", that he has not sufficient good sense to ask for peace; that he is to suffer worse and worse punishment at the hands of the Russians, and finally, that he, Voltaire, is very angry at Moustapha for having forced Catherine to interrupt the work on her code of laws in order to beat the Turks. He concludes with, "But thanks to you, she has mounted to the temple of glory by all the paths. Remain in your temple of pride and ignorance and believe that I will be always yours, The Hermit of Ferney." By way of a postscript he adds, "I take the liberty of sending my letter to her Imperial Majesty of Russia, who will not fail to have it delivered to you." Again Voltaire, in an attack of the fever, has spent some time in Hell and brings Catherine news from the banks of the River Styx. There he had met Tomyris, Semiramis, Pen~thé~silé~e and Elizabeth of England, and they had told him that none of them had approached the true
Catherine, the Catherine who would be the wonder of all posterity: "but they told me also that you are not at the end of your work and that you must exert yourself still more to defeat my dear Moustapha". Having been in Hell he anticipates a visit to the other world and writes, "I have another favor to ask of Your Majesty. It is that you hasten the completion of your two great works in order that I may have the pleasure of talking of them with Peter the Great, to whom I shall soon be paying my court in the other world." Such examples could be given without end did space and time allow or were they necessary to illustrate that quality of Voltaire's work which led Catherine herself to call him "The Divinity of Gaiety."

The influence of Voltaire on Catherine by means of correspondance is obvious in the letters themselves and requires little external evidence. Catherine's letters to Voltaire contain the frank avowal of this influence and relate the material results of its effects in various manifestations, literary, political and humanitarian. In October of 1763, at the very opening stage of their correspondence, she wrote to him, "I assure you that since 1746, since I have been mistress of myself, I have been under the greatest obligations to you. Before that time I read only romances but by chance your works fell into my hands; since then I have never ceased to read them and I have wanted no books which were not as well written and from which I could draw
as much profit. But where are they to be found? I return then to this first originator of my taste and of my most cherished entertainment. Assuredly sir, if I have any learning at all, it is to you that I owe it! Speaking of this declaration Sainte-Beuve says, "Her memoires show that in this she was not merely complimentang him and that she was telling only the truth. The first year of her marriage she had in fact, read only romances and those, of the ones which were no longer read in France except in the provinces. Mme. de Sévigné' began to cure her of it; Catherine devoured her letters: then the works of Voltaire fell into her hands and from that time on she was more choice in her readings.-----Voltaire had introduced her to the serious." The article on Catherine in the Encyclopedia Britannica says, "As a ruler, Catherine professed a great contempt for system which she said she had been taught to despise by the master Voltaire." This does not refer exclusively to system in literature nor does Catherine intend that Voltaire is her master in literature only. She turned to him or accepted his advice also in other matters. The Prince de Ligne, a favored guest at the court of Russia, in his "Memoires", quotes Catherine thus, "I have tried to get something out of your clever men of 'isms'; I have had them come to Russia; and have sometimes written to them, but they bore me and they never understand me. There is no one like my kind protector Voltaire. Do you know it was he who brought me into vogue? He paid me well for the pleasure I have taken all my life in reading him; he has taught me a
great many things while amusing me. " This was true in every respect. Catherine does not explain how or where Voltaire had "brought her into vogue", but it is known how ardently he had striven to give her a good reputation. She had need of such a champion for she stood before the people in a bloody, suspicious light. To popularize her fair name was not a light undertaking. For this work Voltaire wrote to D'Argental asking his cooperation in Paris, "We are under obligations to her for having had the courage to dethrone her husband, for she reigns with wisdom and with glory; and we ought to bless a crowned head that makes tolerance universal through one hundred and thirty-five degrees of longitude—Say then, much good of Catherine, I pray you, and create for her a good reputation at Paris." This is but another expression of Voltaire's influence and the method in which it was effective. After all perhaps it was greatest in a literary way. Waliszewski, a Russian himself, whose writings show an intelligent insight into the nature of his nation's literature, says of Catherine's own literary productions, "In vain do we seek for a single original idea in all her writings. She gave us an heroic imitation of Voltaire." Though his literary weight with Catherine was undoubtedly his greatest weight with her, it was not perhaps the realization of his greatest ambition to influence her opinions and her works. Politically he was very thirsty for power. Here however, he was less successful in a direct way, but indirectly many of his ideas bore fruit. He was not successful in his attempts to impose upon Russia the adoption of some of his schemes,
for example, the use of war-chariots. But this had been a passing fancy of his. His wishes for Sparta and the restoration of Greek liberty were also doomed to disappointment by the fortunes of war and the very tide of circumstance. In the position of a man entirely external to the situation he could not hope for better success. Moreover he had been extravagant and quixotic in his desires. But his deepest ambitions were more fortunate. More than the political freedom of Greece he desired the intellectual freedom of the entire world. He wished to have some measure of the work of advancing civilization. Catherine ruled one hundred and thirty-five degrees of longitude. Here then was opportunity awaiting him, could he but mould her as the agent of his ideas. He could urge her to push on to Constantinople, to wipe out the Turks, and spread over their land the light of modern civilization. True, Catherine never ruled her empire from Constantinople, yet may she not have wished to do so? Were the effects of Voltaire's suggestions any the less real for having fallen short of their final complete fulfillment? One thing Voltaire seems not to have realized or to have ignored out of enthusiasm for the empress. He thirsts for the spread of enlightenment among the Turks. Russia however, was as a matter of fact, very little less in need of this enlightenment than was Turkey. Perhaps Voltaire did not appreciate this fact. Russia was yet a barbarous people. Nothing, however, could help their advancement more effectively than leadership by an enlightened, highly civilized ruler. The light from this central source must be a feeble ray indeed when shed over
the vast inertia of Russia, yet faint as it was, it was a step in progress. So it was toward the empress that Voltaire must direct his efforts. He showed an appreciation of a definite psychological fact in the manner of his suggestions. He had a way of mentioning what he would like to see done and adding that, if the possibility arises, he knows she will do it. He is subtle in suggesting things to her in such a way as to make her think that she had already had them in mind and had intended to do them. These were his methods of using Catherine as an agent to carry out his ideas for civilization.

Before proceeding to a final analysis of Voltaire's character as it is shown by these letters, it appears appropriate now to give a brief summary of that of Catherine, his correspondent. No attempt at a profound or complete analysis of this remarkably complex nature will be made. The idea is merely to call attention to those traits which the letters themselves caused to stand out most prominently. That which first strikes the reader who looks back on a perusal of her correspondence in an effort to form a general opinion of Catherine, is the extreme breadth and intelligence of her interests. This was ever a point of surprise and admiration to Voltaire, to him who had an iron in every fire; that Catherine, an empress, occupied with all the exacting demands of a long campaign, could yet keep so closely in touch with so many other phases of life. He declares that she is constantly showing him a new one of her various selves, and wonders that there should be so many. He marvels, as we
must do, that she can take an intelligent and a directing interest in a great war and yet find time to search out and verify the merits of a scientific treatise on the movements of ice for whose author Voltaire seeks an associate membership in the St. Petersbourg Academy of Sciences. Yet such extremes and even greater ones met in this woman. At one time she would occupy herself with fighting the Turks, drawing up a code of laws, buying works of art in foreign markets, investigating the possibilities of a commerce in watches through Russia from Ferney to China, introducing into her nation inoculation for small-pox, actively serving as a royal patroness of schools for young ladies and assisting in selecting plays for their amateur productions, studying the properties of ice, entertaining many royal and literary personages as visitors, busying herself in a hundred other affairs, and at the same time writing plays and carrying on a voluminous correspondence. And her interest in these things was not a superficial one. It went to the bottom of subjects. But if her interest was genuinely intelligent the very breadth of it was disastrous to its effectiveness. She divided her interests too broadly. Desnoiresterres says, "The genius of Catherine was less inventive than one of organization. She knew how to read and derive benefit from what she read, and to appropriate to her own use that which she found good and great in the annals of other peoples". She, herself, carries the idea of her own genius and her own character even further. She said, "Je suis une grande commenceuse". Her mania was to undertake things which she seldom carried
to completion. Desnoiresterres says further of her, "A friend, passionate and enthusiastic, an adept at philosophy and all the ideas of emancipation and tolerance looked upon so askance by the sovereigns of the old Europe------She loves letters and arts for their own sakes." The letters, to whose evidence is confined this judgment of her, do not show in what measure their character of "commenceuse" was effective over the other traits. The love of art seems to have been persistent. Throughout Voltaire's life her friendship for him was constant though indeed it did seem to flag toward the last years. This may have been the result of greater demands upon her time and Voltaire may have been partly responsible for his letters were much less frequent. Yet in those letters which they did exchange the same friendly sentiment has its place. The revolution of her ideas of tolerance lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

Something has already been said as to the sincerity of Catherine's profession of friendship for Voltaire. It has frequently been declared that Catherine saw in Voltaire and his contemporary men of letters, advertising agents who would "blow the Russian trumpet" for her. We may grant for the sake of brevity that some ulterior motive of politics did enter into her correspondence and yet there remains much room for sincerity. Evidences of it are plentiful. "The Cambridge Modern History" says, "She displayed great talent in her letters which were written not only with the direct intention of influencing public opinion in Europe, but from a real interest in the intellectual movement of her day". Morley's "Voltaire" contains a similar judgment; "Catherine II of Russia, of
Anhalt-Zerbst by birth, was the helpful patroness of Diderot and D'Alembert, and was always eager to hear some word from the patron of their encyclopedic church, only praying him not to think her too importunate." A true personal regard for these men entered into the passion which she had for their nation and all things pertaining to it, a passion which so far effected Catherine as to convert her court into a French court. Policy did not dictate that she should offer to buy the entire output of Voltaire's watch factory at Ferney to encourage the commercial growth of Voltaire's new undertaking. And at Voltaire's death an interest all political would have died with him for then nothing remained to be gained through him. But the sincerity of Catherine's attachment to this one at least of her literary correspondents was conclusively proven at his death. Her mourning for him bears every stamp of coming from her heart. They had come close together and Catherine could mourn for him as the world mourns the loss of a great man and as a friend mourns the loss of a friend. As an empress she could give material evidence of her appreciation of him. She wished to purchase Voltaire's library and upon the acceptance of her proposition by Mme. Denis, wrote her a note with her own hand, bearing this inscription, "For Mme. Denis, niece of a great man who loved me much". The letter contained the assurance that "she would regard as a special trust, that library which susceptible souls would never see without remembering that this great man knew how to inspire human beings with the universal benevolence which all his writings breathe, even those of pure diversion because
his own soul was profoundly affected with it". Her interest did not stop with the purchase of his entire library, but she sent for Wagnièrè, Voltaire's secretary, to come to St. Petersburg to arrange the books in the identical order in which they had lined the shelves at Ferney. During this work she said to Wagnièrè, looking at a bust of Voltaire which stood in the library, "There, Monsieur, is the man to whom I owe all that I know and all that I am." Not satisfied with possessing simply his library, she had constructed at St. Petersburg, an exact reproduction of Ferney, carrying out the duplication to the very patterns of the upholstery of the furniture. Such demonstrations of her respect for Voltaire's memory indicate more than a political interest in her attachment to him during his life.

A task more difficult than the analysis of Catherine is an attempt to give a sketch of Voltaire as shown by his correspondence. It is slightly simplified however, in being limited to the exposition of such of his character as is shown in his correspondence with Catherine alone. It is note-worthy that in these particular letters the most worthy qualities of Voltaire's character are most marked. He is at his best so far as a display of his personality goes. Goethe says, "When a family has made itself prominent through several generations by its merits and its various successes, it often ends by producing in the number of its scions an individual who combines the faults and qualities of all his ancestors, so that
he, himself, represents his entire family. It is the same among celebrated nations; most of them have seen born in their midst men profoundly stamped with the national physiognomy, as though nature had destined them to offer the model of it. And it is so that nature produced in Voltaire, the man most eminently endowed with all qualities which characterize and honor his nation and charged him to represent France to the universe. In many respects Voltaire gives a very fair and favorable representation of his nation, but it must be born in mind that in the time during which this correspondence was being carried on, Voltaire was practically expatriated. This may well account for a certain lack of national pride which allowed him unpatriotically to hold up to laughter his own people. Saint-Beuve says that he proved his assertion to Catherine that the French were monkeys by being himself, the greatest monkey of them all. We need not reproach him however, for his lack of patriotism, even were it a notorious lack, which it was not. Though eminently and representatively French he was not first a citizen of France. He was not at all a nationalist. He was before all else a citizen of the world, owing his allegiance to the sovereigns of reason and tolerance. To this allegiance he was faithful. This large nation of his adoption offered ample room for the exploitation of a breadth of interest which no narrower limits of political affiliation could have confined. George McLean Harper says, "He touched life at a thousand points and impressed the stamp of his personality upon the world's soft wax". The man to do this
must consider another man not first as a fellow Frenchman, but as a brother man. He could touch life at every point better than could another because of the qualities which Lord Brougham describes when he says, "His vast information on all subjects and his ready wit—must have conspired to render his company a treat of the highest order." This combination is equally effective in his letters. His wit had already been considered. A reader never ceases to be surprised at some new display of the encyclopaedic qualities of his mind. There seems no subject upon which he cannot and does not converse. The history of the ancients was a delight to him and a splendid field for ridicule of his contemporary philosophers and theologists. From this his attention could quickly jump to an inquiry into the force with which ice-bombs would burst at certain temperatures, and from that to the watch-trade with China, or the recommendation of a German for the position of Russian Consul at Cadiz. An attempt to list his different interests however, would be mere cataloging. They were world-wide and all-inclusive. More important than an enumeration of them all is a statement of the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm with which he engaged himself in each. He never espoused a cause half-heartedly. No more did he love and hate in half-measure. In this again, he is essentially French. A cause once undertaken occupied him night and day till it was won or lost. The Salas and Sirven affairs are world-famous examples of this quality in him. He was not a "commenceur". When he did fail in an undertaking
it was more often than not, due to the lack of a profound knowledge of the affairs involved. If his information was world-wide his deep penetration into causes and effects of political and social phenomena was much more restricted,—witness his efforts to influence international affairs.—Failure then was due to this lack, never to lack of strength of purpose or of enthusiasm. The enthusiasm with which he espoused any cause which he deemed a worthy one is reflected even in the business ventures of his life. Paradoxical as it may seem he could also be very businesslike. He is politely insistant, even to Catherine, that she pay to the last ruble for a shipment of watches from his factory even though, through an error, the shipment had been over-valued. Business however, has little part in this correspondence. A much greater part is taken up with the advancement of recommendations of persons who came to him seeking introductions to the court of Russia. Here too, his impetuous heart sometimes spoke before his head had considered and at one time he recommended to Catherine a fugitive from her own prisons. But such mistakes were not numerous among the long list of persons to whom his benevolence was of actual service. Another strongly marked trait of the many-sided Voltaire is his vanity. It is omni-present in his letters and manifests itself in many ways. One of the most childish examples of it perhaps is his sending to Catherine his portrait painted by Barrat. In this instance it led him into the shallow deception which neither at this time or at any other times ever deceived anybody. It was to attribute
his actions or more commonly his works to some one else. He accused the painter of having sent the portrait against his will but still he accompanied the gift with a very pretty compliment to the empress. Desnoi
eres said of his vanity that it "made him so susceptible to the flattery of a corre-
respondence with Catherine that he not only over-looked her faults himself but tried to defend her against others." Paradoxically again, we sometimes find strange hints of modesty in this man. They are rare, however, occurring in cases where he sent Catherine verses, attributing them to some other person and going into elaborate explanations of how he happened to be the one who presented them. His protestations of humbleness and fear lest he importune her too much for news or information, are prompted either by the prevailing mode of speech and writing, or else are insincere or not intended in their literal interpretations. The gaiety of his letters is another marked characteristic. His ebullient spirits sweep aside all grayness or dissipatedness. In one of her letters responding to one in which Voltaire had complained of having again been at death's door, she says, "At seeing the vivacity which prevails in your letter I can not believe you really ill." And upon hearing of his death she said, "Since he is dead, wit has lost its honor; he was the divinity of gaiety." This gaiety and lightness of his style is emphasized by what Carlyle called his "fitful abruptness". Carlyle further said of him, "He would say that if not heroic, he is at all times a perfectly civilized man." He is least heroic and certainly least gay toward the end of this correspondence. He seems to prefigure
a cooling of Catherine's interest if not of her friendship for him. And he begins to genuinely fear annoying her with what he calls his "miserable importunities," having allowed a painter to send her his picture and having asked for two or three consulates for his protegés. He says, "I feel that I am annoying the conqueress, the legislatrice, the benefactress; it is permitted to me to adore her, but not to weary her to this excess. I must put boundaries to my zeal and my boldness. I must limit myself in spite of myself to a profound respect."

In this light Voltaire presents a rather pathetic figure and makes a strong plea for sympathy while showing absolutely no feeling of self-pity. These letters alone give one an impression of an old man, lonesome in his youthful activity, who begins to see death approaching. Lively and youthful as they are, in comparison with the letters which have gone before, they begin to show a general weariness. Perhaps this effect proceeds from the very faint shade of formality added to the tone of his former letters. But his work was nearly over. He had nearly finished that correspondence which Hamley says, "would of itself, seem to constitute the labour of an industrious life."

His recuperation was but a brief one. Carlyle says, "He returns after a long exile to his native city---; and closes a life---by the most appropriate demise; by drowning, as it were, in an ocean of applause, so that, as he lived for fame, he may be said to have died of it". If he had lived for fame, his life was a success. Saint-Beuve's summary of him is, "Whosoever will gather from the correspondences of that day, the sayings and judgments upon him,---will gain an idea of the true Voltaire."
His friend, D'Alembert, urged Frederic to erect a statue to Voltaire in a chapel at Berlin. Frederic refused saying, "that he had in his own possession a finer monument to Voltaire's greatness—a part of that correspondence which if one of Arouet's surest titles to immortality and contains at once, the history of Voltaire 'intime' and of the eighteenth century." In his letters better than in anything else Voltaire has left his story and his likeness.
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