in the Tribe of Politics, philosophy cannot be held responsible for his crimes. The gentleman instance
Voltaire as one of the instigators of this Revolution. Granted that it is so. Yet, if he contends that he embarked
in politics during this eventful period, his is then
the province of defending him, not mine, for he
then becomes a man of action. But whatever may
now be the opinion of the world of this Revolution,
the motives of the enlightened minds that first put
This call in motion were, beyond doubt, purely patriotic
and their cause the cause of liberty. Roman Catholi-
cism, which for centuries had filtered and travelled
its upward progress and whose baleful effects still
acted upon unhappy France, threatened to baffle
every effort of the patriots to cast off the galling yoke.
Politics were fashioned after its image: power was reputed
divine. The people were trudging on in blind and
inglorious obedience to its corrupt teachings, which
made all inquiry into the validity of its institutions a blas-
phemy a heresy. The Reformation had thrown new
light upon the subject and reason began to supplant
superstition and we hear the spirit of Philosophy
raising its elbow voice against this degrading
tyranny. Its notes at first cautious, by degrees swelled.