months. “When he happened to be tired by having applied himself too much to his philosophical meditations, he would go downstairs to refresh himself, and discoursed with the Van der Spijcks about anything that might afford matter for an ordinary conversation, and even about trifles. He also took pleasure in smoking a pipe of tobacco ; or, when he had a mind to divert himself somewhat longer, he looked for some spiders and made them fight together, or he threw some flies into the cobweb, and was so well pleased with the result of that battle that he would some­times break into laughter ” (Colerus). He also conversed at times on more serious topics with the simple people with whom he lodged, often, for example, talking over the sermon with them when they came from church. He occasionally went himself to hear the Lutheran pastor preach—the predecessor of Colerus—and would advise the Van der Spijcks not to miss any sermon of so excellent a preacher. The children, too, he put in mind of going often to church, and taught them to be obedient and dutiful to their parents. One day his landlady, who may have heard strange stories of her solitary lodger, came to him in some trouble to ask him whether he believed she could be saved in the religion she professed. “ Your religion is a good one,” said Spinoza; “you need not look for another, nor doubt that you will be saved in it, provided that, while you apply yourself to piety, you live at the same time a peace­able and quiet life.” Only once, it is recorded, did Spinoza’s admirable self-control give way, and that was when he received the news of the murder of the De Witts by a frantic mob in the streets of The Hague. It was in the year 1672, when the sudden invasion of the Low Countries by Louis XIV. raised an irresistible clamour for a military leader and overthrew the republican constitution for which the De Witts had struggled. John De Witt had been Spinoza’s friend, and had bestowed a small pension upon him ; he had Spinoza’s full sympathy in his political aims. On receiving the news of the brutal murder of the two brothers, Spinoza burst into tears, and his indignation was so roused that he was bent upon publicly denouncing the crime upon the spot where it had been committed. But the timely caution of his host prevented his issuing forth to almost certain death. Not long after Spinoza was himself in danger from the mob, in consequence of a visit which he paid to the French camp. He had been in correspondence with one Colonel Stoupe, a Swiss theologian and soldier, then serving with the prince of Condé, the commander of the French army at Utrecht. From him Spinoza received a communication enclosing a passport from the French commander, who wished to make his acquaintance and promised him a pension from the French king at the easy price of a dedication to his majesty. Spinoza went to Utrecht, but returned without seeing Condé, who had in the meantime been called elsewhere ; the pension he civilly declined. There may have been nothing more in the visit than is contained in this narra­tive ; but on his return Spinoza found that the populace of The Hague regarded him as no better than a spy. The town was full of angry murmurs, and the landlord feared that the mob would storm his house and drag Spinoza out. Spinoza quieted his fears as well as he could, assuring him that as soon as the crowd made any threatening move­ment he would go out to meet them, “ though they should serve me as they did the poor De Witts. I am a good republican and have never had any aim but the honour and welfare of the state.” Happily the danger passed off without calling for such an ordeal.

In 1673 Spinoza received an invitation from the elector palatine to quit his retirement and become professor of philosophy in the university of Heidelberg. The offer was couched in flattering terms, and conveyed an express

assurance of “ the largest freedom of speech in philosophy, which the prince is confident that you will not misuse to disturb the established religion.” But Spinoza’s experience of theological sensitiveness led him to doubt the possibility of keeping on friendly terms with the established religion, if he were placed in a public capacity. Moreover, he was not strong ; he had had no experience of public teaching ; and he foresaw that the duties of a chair would put an end to private research. For all these reasons he court­eously declined the offer made to him. There is little more to tell of his life of solitary meditation. In 1675 we learn from his correspondence that he entertained the idea of publishing the *Ethics,* and made a journey to Amsterdam to arrange matters with the printer. “ But, whilst I was busy with this,” he writes, “the report was spread everywhere that a certain book of mine was in the press, wherein I endeavoured to show that there was no God ; and this report found credence with many. Where­upon certain theologians (themselves perhaps the authors of it) took occasion to complain of me to the prince and the magistrates ; moreover, the stupid Cartesians, because they are commonly supposed to side with me, desiring to free themselves from that suspicion, were diligent without ceasing in their execrations of my doctrines and writings, and are as diligent still.” As the commotion seemed to grow worse instead of subsiding, Spinoza consigned the manuscript once more to his desk, from which it was not to issue till after his death. His last literary work was the unfinished *Tractatus Politicus* and the preparation of notes for a new edition of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politi­cus,* in which he hoped to remove some of the misunder­standings which the book had met with. The *Tractatus Politicus* develops his philosophy of law and government on the lines indicated in his other works, and connects itself closely with the theory enunciated by Hobbes a generation before. Consumption had been making its insidious inroads upon Spinoza for many years, and early in 1677 he must have been conscious that he was seriously ill. On Saturday the 20th of February he sent to Amsterdam for his friend Dr Meyer. On the following day the Van der Spijcks, having no thought of immediate danger, went to the afternoon service. When they came back Spinoza was no more ; he had died about three in the afternoon with Meyer for the only witness of his last moments. Spinoza was buried on the 25th of February “in the new church upon the Spuy, being attended,” Colerus tells us, “ by many illustrious persons and followed by six coaches.” He was little more than forty-four years of age.

Spinoza’s effects were few and realized little more than was re­quired for the payment of charges and outstanding debts. “One need only cast one’s eyes upon the account,” says his biographer, “to perceive that it was the inventory of a true philosopher. It contains only some small books, some engravings, a few lenses, and the instruments to polish them.” His desk, containing his letters and his unpublished works, Spinoza had previously charged his landlord to convey to Jan Rieuwertz, a publisher in Amsterdam. This was done, and the *Opera Posthuma* appeared in the same year, without the author’s name, but with his initials upon the title- page. They were furnished with a preface written in Dutch by Jarig Jellis, a Mennonite friend of Spinoza’s, and translated into Latin by Dr Meyer. Next year the book was proscribed in a violently worded edict by the states of Holland and West Friesland. The obloquy which thus gathered round Spinoza in the later years of his life remained settled upon his memory for a full hundred years after his death. Hume’s casual allusion to “this famous atheist” and his “hideous hypothesis” is a fair specimen of the tone in which he is usually referred to ; people talked about Spinoza, Lessing said, “as if he were a dead dog.” The change of opinion in this respect may be dated from Lessing’s famous con­versation with Jacobi in 1780. Lessing, Goethe, Herder, Novalis, and Schleiermacher, not to mention philosophers like Schelling and Hegel, united in recognizing the unique strength and sincerity of Spinoza’s thought, and in setting him in his rightful place among the speculative leaders of mankind. Transfused into their writings, his spirit has had a large share in moulding the philosophic thought