

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Critical Miscellanies (Vol. 2 of 3), Essay 2: Turgot

Author: John Morley

Release date: October 3, 2007 [eBook #22865]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Paul Murray, René Anderson Benitz and the  
Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CRITICAL MISCELLANIES (VOL. 2 OF 3),  
ESSAY 2: TURGOT \*\*\*

# CRITICAL MISCELLANIES

by

**JOHN MORLEY**

VOL. II.

**Essay 2: Turgot**

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1905

---

## TURGOT.

### I.

	PAGE
Birth and family descent	<a href="#">41</a>
His youth at the Sorbonne	<a href="#">47</a>
Intellectual training	<a href="#">52</a>
His college friends: Morellet, and Loménie de Brienne	<a href="#">54</a>
Turgot refused to become an ecclesiastic	<a href="#">56</a>
His revolt against dominant sophisms of the time	<a href="#">60</a>
Letter to Buffon	<a href="#">61</a>
Precocity of his intellect	<a href="#">65</a>
Letter to Madame de Graffigny	<a href="#">65</a>
Illustrates the influence of Locke	<a href="#">69</a>
Views on marriage	<a href="#">72</a>
On the controversy opened by Rousseau	<a href="#">72</a>
Turgot's power of grave suspense	<a href="#">76</a>

## II.

First Discourse at the Sorbonne	<a href="#">78</a>
Analysis of its contents	<a href="#">80</a>
Criticisms upon it	<a href="#">86</a>
It is one-sided	<a href="#">87</a>
And not truly historic	<a href="#">88</a>
Fails to distinguish doctrine from organisation	<a href="#">89</a>
Omits the Christianity of the East	<a href="#">90</a>
And economic conditions	<a href="#">92</a>
The contemporary position of the Church in Europe	<a href="#">93</a>

## III.

Second Discourse at the Sorbonne	<a href="#">96</a>
Its pregnant thesis of social causation	<a href="#">97</a>
Compared with the thesis of Bossuet	<a href="#">99</a>
And of Montesquieu	<a href="#">100</a>
Analysis of the Second Discourse	<a href="#">102</a>
Characteristic of Turgot's idea of Progress	<a href="#">106</a>
Its limitation	<a href="#">108</a>
Great merit of the Discourse, that it recognises ordered succession	<a href="#">110</a>

## IV.

Turgot appointed Intendant of the Limousin	<a href="#">111</a>
Functions of an Intendant	<a href="#">112</a>
Account of the Limousin	<a href="#">114</a>
Turgot's passion for good government	<a href="#">118</a>
He attempts to deal with the <i>Taille</i>	<a href="#">119</a>
The road <i>Corvée</i>	<a href="#">121</a>
Turgot's endeavours to enlighten opinion	<a href="#">126</a>
Military service	<a href="#">129</a>
"    transport	<a href="#">131</a>
The collection of taxes	<a href="#">132</a>
Turgot's private benevolence	<a href="#">133</a>
Introduces the potato	<a href="#">134</a>
Founds an academy	<a href="#">135</a>
Encourages manufacturing industry	<a href="#">136</a>
Enlightened views on Usury	<a href="#">137</a>
Has to deal with a scarcity	<a href="#">138</a>
His plans	<a href="#">139</a>
Instructive facts connected with this famine	<a href="#">142</a>
Turgot's Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth	<a href="#">149</a>

## V.

Turgot made Controller-General	<a href="#">150</a>
His reforms	<a href="#">151</a>
Their reception	<a href="#">153</a>
His unpopularity	<a href="#">156</a>
Difficulties with the king	<a href="#">157</a>
His dismissal	<a href="#">158</a>
His pursuits in retirement	<a href="#">159</a>
Conclusion	<a href="#">162</a>

[Transcriber's Note: Footnotes have been moved to end of book.]

Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot was born in Paris on the 10th of May 1727. He died in 1781. His life covered rather more than half a century, extending, if we may put it a little roughly, over the middle fifty years of the eighteenth century. This middle period marks the exact date of the decisive and immediate preparation for the Revolution. At its beginning neither the intellectual nor the social elements of the great disruption had distinctly appeared, or commenced their fermentation. At its close their work was completed, and we may count the months thence until the overthrow of every institution in France. It was between 1727 and 1781 that the true revolution took place. The events from '89 were only finishing strokes, the final explosion of a fabric under which every yard had been mined, by the long endeavour for half a century of an army of destroyers deliberate and involuntary, direct and oblique, such as the world has never at any other time beheld.

In 1727 Voltaire was returning from his exile in England, to open the long campaign, of which he was from that time forth to the close of his days the brilliant and indomitable captain. He died in 1778, bright, resolute, humane, energetic, to the last. Thus Turgot's life was almost exactly contemporary with the pregnant era of Voltaire's activity. In the same spring in which Turgot died, Maurepas too came to his end, and Necker was dismissed. The last event was the signal at which the floods of the deluge fairly began to rise, and the revolutionary tide to swell.

[Pg 42]

It will be observed, moreover, that Turgot was born half a generation after the first race of the speculative revolutionists. Rousseau, Diderot, Helvétius, Condillac, D'Alembert, as well as the foreign Hume, so much the greatest of the whole band of innovators, because penetrating so much nearer to the depths, all came into the world which they were to confuse so unspeakably, in the half dozen years between 1711 and 1717. Turgot was of later stock and comes midway between these fathers of the new church, between Hume, Rousseau, Diderot, and the generation of its fiery practical apostles, Condorcet, Mirabeau, Robespierre.<sup>[1]</sup> The only other illustrious European of this decade was Adam Smith, who was born in 1723, and between whose labours and some of the most remarkable of Turgot's there was so much community. We cannot tell how far the gulf between Turgot and the earlier band was fixed by the accident that he did not belong to their generation in point of time. The accident is in itself only worth calling attention to, in connection with his distance from them in other and more important points than time.

[Pg 43]

The years of Turgot exactly bridge the interval between the ministry of the infamous Dubois and the ministry of the inglorious Calonne; between the despair and confusion of the close of the regency, and the despair and confusion of the last ten years of the monarchy. In 1727 we stand on the threshold of that far-resounding fiery workshop, where a hundred hands wrought the cunning implements and Cyclopean engines that were to serve in storming the hated citadels of superstition and injustice. In 1781 we emerge from these subterranean realms into the open air, to find ourselves surrounded by all the sounds and portents of imminent ruin. This, then, is the significance of the date of Turgot's birth.

---

His stock was Norman, and those who amuse themselves by finding a vital condition of the highest ability in antiquity of blood, may quote the descent of Turgot in support of their delusion. His biographers speak of one Togut, a Danish Prince, who walked the earth some thousand years before the Christian era; and of Saint Turgot in the eleventh century, the Prior of Durham, biographer of Bede, and first minister of Malcolm III. of Scotland. We shall do well not to linger in this too dark and frigid air. Let us pass over Togut and Saint Turgot; and the founder of a hospital in the thirteenth century; and the great-great-grandfather who sat as president of the Norman nobles in the States-General of 1614, and the grandfather who deserted arms for the toga. History is hardly concerned in this solemn marshalling of shades.

[Pg 44]

Even with Michel-Etienne, the father of Turgot, we have here no dealing. Let it suffice to say that he held high municipal office in Paris, and performed its duties with exceptional honour and spirit, giving sumptuous fêtes, constructing useful public works, and on one occasion jeoparding his life with a fine intrepidity that did not fail in his son, in appeasing a bloody struggle between two bodies of Swiss and French guards. There is in the library of the British Museum a folio of 1740, containing elaborate plates and letterpress, descriptive of the fêtes celebrated by the city of Paris with Michel-Etienne Turgot as its chief officer, on the occasion of the marriage of Louise-Elizabeth of France to Don Philip of Spain (August 1739). As one contemplates these courtly sumptuosities, La Bruyère's famous picture recurs to the mind, of far other scenes in the same gay land. 'We see certain wild animals, male and female, scattered over the fields, black, livid, all burnt by the sun, bound to the earth that they dig and work with unconquerable pertinacity; they have a sort of articulate voice, and when they rise on their feet, they show a human face; in fact they are men.' That these violent and humiliating contrasts are eternal and inevitable, is the last word of the dominant philosophy of society; and one of the reasons why Turgot's life is worth studying, is that he felt in so pre-eminent a degree the urgency of lightening the destiny of that livid, wild, hardly articulate, ever-toiling multitude.

[Pg 45]

The sum of the genealogical page is that Turgot inherited that position which, falling to worthy souls, is of its nature so invaluable, a family tradition of exalted courage and generous public spirit. There have been noble and patriotic men who lacked this inheritance, but we may be sure

that even these would have fought the battle at greater advantage, if a magnanimous preference for the larger interests had come to them as a matter of instinctive prejudice, instead of being acquired as a matter of reason. The question of titular aristocracy is not touched by this consideration, for titular aristocracies postpone the larger interests to the narrow interests of their order. And Turgot's family was only of the secondary noblesse of the robe.

Turgot was the third son of his father. As the employments which persons of respectable family could enter were definite and stereotyped, there was little room for debate as to the calling for which a youth should prepare himself. Arms, civil administration, and the church, furnished the only three openings for a gentleman. The effects of this rigorous adherence to artificial and exclusive rules of caste were manifestly injurious to society, as such caste rules always are after a society has passed beyond a certain stage. To identify the interests of the richest and most powerful class with the interests of the church, of the army, and of a given system of civil government, was indeed to give to that class the strongest motives for leaving the existing social order undisturbed. It unfortunately went too far in this direction, by fostering the strongest possible motives of hostility to such modifications in these gigantic departments as changing circumstances might make needful, in the breasts of the only men who could produce these modifications without a violent organic revolution. Such a system left too little course to spontaneity, and its curse is the curse of French genius. Some of its evil effects were obvious and on the surface. The man who should have been a soldier found himself saying mass and hearing confessions. Vauvenargues, who was born for diplomacy or literature, passed the flower of his days in the organised dreariness of garrisons and marches. In our own day communities and men who lead them have still to learn that no waste is so profuse and immeasurable, even from the material point of view, as that of intellectual energy, checked, uncultivated, ignored, or left without its opportunity. In France, until a very short time before the Revolution, we can hardly point to a single recognised usage which did not augment this waste. The eldest son usually preserved the rank and status of the family, whether civil or military. Turgot's eldest brother was to devote himself to civil administration, the next to be a soldier, and Turgot himself to be an ecclesiastic.

[Pg 46]

The second of the brothers, who began by following arms, had as little taste for them as the future minister had for the church. It is rather remarkable that he seems to have had the same passion for administration, and he persuaded the government after the loss of Canada that Guiana, to be called Equinoctial France, would if well governed become some sort of equivalent for the northern possession. He was made Governor-general, but he had forgotten to take the climate into account, and the scheme came to an abortive end, involving him in a mass of confused quarrels which lasted some years. He had a marked love for botany, agriculture, and the like; was one of the founders of the Society of Agriculture in 1760; and was the author of various pieces on points of natural history.<sup>[2]</sup>

[Pg 47]

Turgot went as a boarder first to the college of Louis-le-Grand, then to that of Plessis; thence to the seminary of Saint Sulpice, where he took the degree of bachelor in theology; and from Saint Sulpice to the Sorbonne. His childhood and youth, like that of other men who have afterwards won love and admiration, have their stories. The affection of one biographer records how the pocket-money with which the young Turgot was furnished, used always instantly to disappear, no one knew how nor on what. It was discovered that he gave it to poor schoolfellows to enable them to buy books. Condorcet justly remarks on this trait, that 'goodness and even generosity are not rare sentiments in childhood; but for these sentiments to be guided by such wisdom, this really seems the presage of an extraordinary man, all whose sentiments should be virtues, because they would always be controlled by reason.'<sup>[3]</sup> It is at any rate certain that the union of profound benevolence with judgment, which this story prefigures, was the supreme distinction of Turgot's character. It is less pleasant to learn that Turgot throughout his childhood was always repulsed by his mother, who deemed him sullen, because he failed to make his bow with good grace, and was shy and taciturn. He fled from her visitors, and would hide himself behind sofa or screen; until dragged forth for social inspection.<sup>[4]</sup> This is only worth recording, because the same external awkwardness and lack of grace remained with Turgot to the end, and had something to do with the unpopularity that caused his fall. Perhaps he was thinking of his own childhood, when he wrote that fathers are often indifferent, or incessantly occupied with the details of business, and that he had seen the very parents who taught their children that there is nothing so noble as to make people happy, yet repulse the same children when urging some one's claim to charity or favour, and intimidate their young sensibility, instead of encouraging and training it.<sup>[5]</sup>

[Pg 48]

Morellet, one of the best known of the little group of friends and brother students at the Sorbonne, has recorded other authentic traits. Turgot, he says, united the simplicity of a child to a peculiar dignity that forced the respect of his comrades. His modesty and reserve were those of a girl, and those equivocal references in which the undisciplined animalism of youth often has a stealthy satisfaction, always called the blood to his cheeks and covered him with embarrassment. For all that, his spirit was full of a frank gaiety, and he would indulge in long bursts of laughter at a pleasantry or frolic that struck him. We may be glad to know this, because without express testimony to the contrary, there would have been some reason for suspecting that Turgot was defective in that most wholesome and human quality of a capacity for laughter.

[Pg 49]

The sensitive purity which Morellet notices, not without slight lifting of the eyebrow, remained with Turgot throughout his life. This was the more remarkable from the prevailing laxity of opinion upon this particular subject, perhaps the worst blemish upon the feeling and intelligence of the revolutionary schools. For it was not merely libertines, like Marmontel, making a plea for

their own dissoluteness, who habitually spoke of these things with inconsiderate levity. Grave men of blameless life, like Condorcet, deliberately argued in favour of leaving a loose rein to the mutual inclinations of men and women, and laughed at the time 'wasted in quenching the darts of the flesh.'<sup>[6]</sup> It is true that at D'Holbach's house, the headquarters of the dogmatic atheism in which the irreligious reaction culminated, this was the only theme on which freedom of speech was sometimes curtailed. But the fact that such a restriction should have been noticed, suggests that it was exceptional.<sup>[7]</sup> One good effect followed, let us admit. The virtuousness of continence was not treated as a superstition by those who vindicated it as Turgot did, but discussed like any other virtue; and was defended not as an intuition of faith, but as a reasoned conclusion of the judgment. It was permitted to occupy no solitary and mysterious throne, apart and away from other conditions and parts of human excellence and social wellbeing. There is intrinsically no harm in any virtue being accepted in the firm shape of a simple prejudice. On the contrary, there is a multitude of practical advantages in such a consolidated and spontaneously working order. But in considering conduct and character, and forming an opinion upon infractions of a virtue, we cannot be just unless we have analysed its conditions, and this is what the eighteenth century did defectively with regard to that particular virtue which so often usurps the name of all of the virtues together. In this respect Turgot's original purity of character withdrew him from the error of the time.

[Pg 50]

With the moral quality that we have seen, Morellet adds that for the intellectual side Turgot as a boy had a prodigious memory. He could retain as many as a hundred and eighty lines of verse, after hearing them twice, or sometimes even once. He knew by heart most of Voltaire's fugitive pieces, and long passages in his poems and tragedies. His predominant characteristics are described as penetration, and that other valuable faculty to which penetration is an indispensable adjunct, but which it by no means invariably implies—a spirit of broad and systematic co-ordination. The unusual precocity of his intelligence was perhaps imperfectly appreciated by his fellow-students, it led him so far beyond any point within their sight. It has been justly said of him that he passed at once from infancy to manhood, and was in the rank of sages before he had shaken off the dust of the playground. He was of the type of those who strangle serpents while yet in the cradle. We know the temperament which from the earliest hour consumes with eager desire for knowledge, and energises spontaneously with unceasing and joyful activity in that bright and pure morning of intellectual curiosity, which neither the dull tumultuous needs of life nor the mists of spiritual misgiving have yet come up to make dim. Of this temperament was Turgot in a superlative degree, and its fire never abated in him from college days, down to the last hours while he lay racked with irremediable anguish.

[Pg 51]

To a certain extent this was the glorious mark of all the best minds of the epoch; from Voltaire downwards, they were inflamed by an inextinguishable and universal curiosity. Voltaire hardly left a single corner of the field entirely unexplored in science, poetry, history, philosophy. Rousseau wrote a comic opera and was an ardent botanist. Diderot wrote, and wrote well and intelligently, *de omni scibili*, and was the author alike of the Letters on the Blind and Jacques le Fataliste. No era was ever so little the era of the specialist.

[Pg 52]

---

The society of the Sorbonne corresponded exactly to a college at one of our universities, and will be distinguished by the careful reader from the faculty of theology in the university, which was usually, but not always, composed of *docteurs de Sorbonne*. It consisted of a large number of learned men in the position of fellows, and a smaller number of younger students, who lived together just as undergraduates do, in separate apartments, but with common hall, library, and garden. One of Turgot's masters, Sigorgne, was the first to teach in the university the Newtonian principles of astronomy, instead of the Cartesian hypothesis of vortices. As is well known, Cartesianism had for various reasons taken a far deeper root in France than it ever did here, and held its place a good generation after Newtonian ideas were accepted and taught at Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>[8]</sup> Voltaire's translation of the *Principia*, which he was prevented by the Cartesian chancellor, D'Aguesseau, from publishing until 1738, overthrew the reigning system, and gave a strong impulse to scientific inquiry.

[Pg 53]

Turgot mastered the new doctrine with avidity. In the acute letter of criticism which, while still at the Sorbonne, he addressed to Buffon, he pointedly urged it as the first objection to that writer's theory of the formation and movements of the planets, that any attempt at fundamental explanations of this kind was a departure from 'the simplicity and safe reserve of the philosophy of Newton.'<sup>[9]</sup> He only, however, made a certain advance in mathematics. He appears to have had no peculiar or natural aptitude for this study; though he is said to have constantly blamed himself for not having gone more deeply into it. It is hardly to be denied that mathematical genius and philosophic genius do not always go together. The precision, definiteness, and accurate limitations of the method of the one, are usually unfriendly to the brooding, tentative, uncircumscribed meditation which is the productive humour in the other. Turgot was essentially of the philosophising temper. Though the activity of his intelligence was incessant, his manner of work was the reverse of quick. 'When he applied to work,' says Morellet, 'when it was a question of writing or doing, he was slow and loitering. Slow, because he insisted on finishing all he did perfectly, according to his own conception of perfection, which was most difficult of attainment, even down to the minutest detail; and because he would not receive assistance, being never contented with what he had not done himself. He also loitered a great deal, losing time in arranging his desk and cutting his pens, not that he was not thinking profoundly through all this

[Pg 54]

trifling; but mere thinking did not advance his work.<sup>[10]</sup> We may admit, perhaps, that the work was all the better for the thinking that preceded it, and that the time which Turgot seemed to waste in cutting his pens and setting his table in order was more fruitfully spent than the busiest hours of most men.

We know the books which Turgot and his friends devoured with ardour. Locke, Bayle, Voltaire, Buffon, relieved Clarke, Leibnitz, Spinosa, Cudworth; and constant discussions among themselves both cleared up and enlarged what they read.<sup>[11]</sup> One of the disputants, certainly not the least amiable, has painted his own part in these discussions: 'I was violent in discussion,' says the good Morellet, as he was pleasantly called, 'but without my antagonist being able to reproach me with a single insult; and sometimes I used to spit blood, after a debate in which I had not allowed a single personality to escape me.'<sup>[12]</sup>

Another member of the circle was Loménie de Brienne, who, in long years after, was chief minister of France for a narrow space through the momentous winter of 1787 and the spring of the next year, filling the gap between Calonne and Necker in a desperate and fatal manner. Loménie's ambition dated from his youth; and it was always personal and mean. While Turgot, his friend, was earnestly meditating on the destinies of the race and the conditions of their development, Loménie was dreaming only of the restoration of his ancestral château of Brienne. Though quite without means, he planned this in his visions on a scale of extreme costliness and magnificence. The dreams fell true. Money came to the family, and the château was built exactly as he had projected it, at a cost of two million francs.<sup>[13]</sup> His career was splendid. He was clever, industrious, and persevering after his fashion, astute, lively, pretentious, a person ever by well-planned hints leading you to suppose his unrevealed profundity to be bottomless; in a word, in all respects an impostor.<sup>[14]</sup> He espoused that richly dowered bride the Church, rose to be Archbishop of Toulouse, and would have risen to be Archbishop of Paris, but for the King's over-scrupulous conviction that 'an Archbishop of Paris must at least believe in God.' He became an immense favourite with Marie Antoinette and the court, was made Minister 'like Richelieu and Mazarin,' and after having postured and played tricks in face of the bursting deluge, and given the government the final impulse into the abyss of bankruptcy, was dismissed with the rich archbishopric of Sens and a cardinal's hat for himself, and good sinecures for his kinsfolk. His last official act was to send for the 20,000 livres for his month's salary, not fully due. His brother, the Count of Brienne, remained in office as Minister of War. He was a person of no talent, his friends allowed, but 'assisted by a good chief clerk, he would have made a good minister; he meant well.' This was hardly a sufficient reason for letting him take 100,000 francs out of an impoverished treasury for the furniture of his residence. The hour, however, was just striking, and the knife was sharpened.

[Pg 55]

[Pg 56]

All his paltry honour and glory Loménie de Brienne enjoyed for a season, until the Jacobins laid violent hands upon him. He poisoned himself in his own palace, just as a worse thing was about to befall him. Alas, poetic justice is the exception in history, and only once in many generations does the drama of the state criminal rise to an artistic fifth act. This was in 1794. In 1750 a farewell dinner had been given in the rooms of the Abbé de Brienne at the Sorbonne, and the friends made an appointment for a game of tennis behind the church of the Sorbonne in the year 1800.<sup>[15]</sup> The year came, but no Loménie, nor Turgot, and the Sorbonne itself had vanished.

When the time arrived for his final acceptance of an ecclesiastical destination, Turgot felt that honourable repugnance, which might have been anticipated alike from his morality and his intelligence, to enter into an engagement which would irrevocably bind him for the rest of his life, either always to hold exactly the same opinions, or else to continue to preach them publicly after he had ceased to hold them privately. No certainty of worldly comfort and advantage could in his eyes counterbalance the possible danger and shame of a position, which might place him between the two alternatives of stifling his intelligence and outraging his conscience—the one by blind, unscrutinising, and immovable acceptance of all the dogmas and sentiments of the Church; the other by the inculcation as truths of what he believed to be false, and the proscription as falsehoods of what he believed to be true. The horror and disgrace of such a situation were too striking for one who used his mind and acted on principle, to run any risk of that situation becoming his own. An ambitious timeserver like Loménie, or a contented adherent of use and wont like Morellet, might well regard such considerations as the products of a weak and eccentric scrupulosity. Turgot was of other calibre, holding it to be only a degree less unprincipled than the avowed selfishness of the adventurer, to contract so serious an engagement on the strength of common hearsay and current usage, without deliberate personal reflection and inquiry.

[Pg 57]

At the close of his course at the Sorbonne, he wrote a letter to his father giving the reasons for this resolution to abandon all idea of an ecclesiastical career and the advancement which it offered him, and seeking his consent for the change from Church to law. His father approved of the resolution, and gave the required consent. As Turgot had studied law as well as theology, no time was lost, and he formally entered the profession of the law as Deputy-Counsellor of the Procureur-Général at the beginning of 1752.

[Pg 58]

His college friends had remonstrated warmly at this surrender of a brilliant prospect. A little deputation of young abbés, fresh from their vows, waited on him at his rooms; in that humour of blithe and sagacious good-will which comes so naturally to men who believe they have just found out Fortune's trick and yoked her fast for ever to the car, they declared that he was about to do something opposed to his own interest and inconsistent with his usual good sense. He was a younger son of a Norman house, and therefore poor; the law without a competency involved no

consideration, and he could hope for no advancement in it: whereas in the Church his family, being possessed of influence and credit, would have no difficulty in procuring for him excellent abbeys and in good time a rich bishopric; here he could realise all his fine dreams of administration, and without ceasing to be a churchman could play the statesman to his heart's content. In one profession he would waste his genius in arguing trifling private affairs, while in the other he would be of the highest usefulness to his country, and would acquire the greatest reputation. Turgot, however, insisted on placing genius and reputation below the necessity of being honest. The object of an oath might be of the least important kind, but he could neither allow himself to play with it, nor believe that a man could abase his profession in public opinion, without at the same time abasing himself. '*You shall do as you will,*' he said; '*for my own part, it is impossible for me to wear a mask all my life.*'<sup>[16]</sup>

[Pg 59]

His clear intelligence revolted from the dominant sophisms of that time, by which philosophers as well as ecclesiastics brought falsehood and hypocrisy within the four corners of a decent doctrine of truth and morality. The churchman manfully argued that he could be most useful to the world if he were well off and highly placed. The philosopher contended that as the world would punish him if he avowed what he had written or what he believed, he was fully warranted in lying to the world as to his writing and belief; for is not the right to have the truth told to you, a thing forfeitable by tyranny and oppression?<sup>[17]</sup> Truth is not mocked, and these sophisms bore their fruit in due season. Perhaps if there had been found on either side in France a hundred righteous men like Turgot, who would not fight in masks, the end might have been other than it was. The lesson remains for those who dream that by reducing pretence to a nicely graduated system, and by leaving an exactly measured margin between what they really believe and what they feign to believe, they are serving the great cause of order. French history informs us what becomes of social order so served. After all, no man can be sure that it is required of him to save society; every man can be sure that he is called upon to keep himself clean from mendacity and equivocate. Such was Turgot's view.

[Pg 60]

We have said that Turgot disdained to fight under a mask. There was one exception, and only one. In 1754 there appeared two letters, nominally from an ecclesiastic to a magistrate, and entitled *Le Conciliateur*. Here it is enough to say that they were intended to enforce the propriety and duty of religious toleration. In a letter to a friend we find Turgot saying, '*Although the Conciliator is of my principles, and those of our friend, I am astonished at your conjectures; it is neither his style nor mine.*'<sup>[18]</sup> Yet Turgot had written it. This is his one public literary equivocation. Let us, at all events, allow that it was resorted to, not to break the law with safety, nor to cloak a malicious attack on a person, but to give additional weight by means of a harmless prosopopœia, to an argument for the noblest of principles.<sup>[19]</sup>

[Pg 61]

---

Before Turgot entered the great world, he had already achieved an amount of success in philosophic speculation, which placed him in the front rank of social thinkers. To that passion for study and the acquisition of knowledge which is not uncommon in youth, as it is one of the most attractive of youth's qualities, there was added in him what is unhappily not common in men and women of any age—an active impulse to use his own intelligence upon the information which he gained from books and professors. He was no conceited or froward caviller at authority, nor born rebel against established teachers and governors. His understanding seriously craved a full and independent satisfaction, and could draw this only from laborious meditation, which should either disclose the inadequacy of the grounds for an opinion, or else establish it, with what would be to him a new and higher because an independently acquired, conclusiveness.

His letter to Buffon, to which we have already referred, is an illustration of this wise, and never captious nor ungracious, caution in receiving ideas. Neither Buffon's reputation, nor the glow of his style, nor the dazzling ingenuity and grandeur of his conceptions—all of them so well calculated, at one-and-twenty, to throw even a vigilant intelligence off its guard—could divert Turgot from the prime scientific duty of confronting a theory with facts. Buffon was for explaining the formation of the earth and the other planets, and their lateral movement, by the hypothesis that a comet had fallen obliquely on to the sun, driven off certain portions of its constituent matter in a state of fusion, and that these masses, made spherical by the mutual attraction of their parts, were carried to different distances in proportion to their mass and the force originally impressed on them. Buffon may have been actuated, both here and in his other famous hypothesis of reproduction, by a desire, less to propound a true and durable explanation, than to arrest by a bold and comprehensive generalisation that attention, which is only imperfectly touched by mere collections of particular facts. The enormous impulse which even the most unscientific of the speculations of Descartes had given to European thought, was a standing temptation to philosophers, not to discard nor relax patient observation, but to bind together the results which they arrived at by this process, by means of some hardy hypothesis. It might be true or not, but it was at any rate sure to strike the imagination, which ever craves wholes; and to stimulate discussion and further discovery, by sending assailants and defenders alike in search of new facts, to confirm or overthrow the position.<sup>[20]</sup>

[Pg 62]

Turgot was less sensible of these possible advantages, than he was alive to the certain dangers of such a method. He perceived that to hold a theory otherwise than as an inference from facts, is to have a strong motive for looking at the facts in a predetermined light, or for ignoring them; an involuntary predisposition most fatal to the discovery of truth, which is nothing more than the conformity of our conception of facts to their adequately observed order. Why, he asks, do you

[Pg 63]

replunge us into the night of hypotheses, justifying the Cartesians and their three elements and their vortices? And whence comes your comet? Was it within the sphere of the sun's attraction? If not, how could it fall from the sphere of the other bodies, and fall on the sun, which was not acting on it? If it was, it must have fallen perpendicularly, not obliquely; and, therefore, if it imparted a lateral movement, this direction must have been impressed on it. And, if so, why should not God have impressed this movement upon the planets directly, as easily as upon the comet to communicate it to them? Finally, how could the planets have left the body of the sun without falling back into it again? What curve did they describe in leaving it, so as never to return? Can you suppose that gravitation could cause the same body to describe a spiral and an ellipse? In the same exact spirit, Turgot brings known facts to bear on Buffon's theory of the arrangement of the terrestrial and marine divisions of the earth's surface. The whole criticism he sent to Buffon anonymously, to assure him that the writer had no other motive than the interest he took in the discovery of truth and the perfection of a great work.<sup>[21]</sup>

[Pg 64]

Turgot's is probably the only case where the biographer has, in emerging from the days of school and college, at once to proceed to expound and criticise the intellectual productions of his hero, and straightway to present fruit and flower of a time that usually does no more than prepare the unseen roots. There is, perhaps, a wider and more stimulating attraction of a dramatic kind in the study of characters which present a history of active and continuous growth; which, while absolutely free from flimsy caprice and disordered eccentricity, are ever surprising our attention by an unsuspected word of calm judgment or fertile energy, a fresh interest or an added sympathy, by the disappearance of some crudity or the assimilation of some new and richer quality. Of such gradual rise into full maturity we have here nothing to record. As a student Turgot had already formed the list of a number of works which he designed to execute; poems, tragedies, philosophic romances, vast treatises on physics, history, geography, politics, morals, metaphysics, and language.<sup>[22]</sup> Of some he had drawn out the plan, and even these plans and fragments possess a novelty and depth of view that belong even to the integrity of few works.

Before passing on to the more scientific speculations of this remarkable intelligence, it is worth while to notice his letter to Madame de Graffigny, both for the intrinsic merit and scope of the ideas it contains and for the proof it furnishes of the interest, at once early and profound, which he took in moral questions lying at the very bottom, as well of sound character, as of a healthy society. Turgot's early passion for literature had made him seize an occasion of being introduced to even so moderately renowned a professor of it as Madame de Graffigny. He happened to be intimate with her niece, who afterwards became the lively and witty wife of Helvétius, somewhat to the surprise of Turgot's friends. For although he persuaded Mademoiselle de Ligniville to present him to her aunt, and though he assiduously attended Madame de Graffigny's literary gatherings, Turgot would constantly quit the circle of men of letters for the sake of a game of battledore with the comely and attractive niece. Hence the astonishment of men that from such familiarity there grew no stronger passion, and that whatever the causes of such reserve, the only issue was a tender and lasting friendship.<sup>[23]</sup>

[Pg 65]

Madame de Graffigny had begged Turgot's opinion upon the manuscript of a work composed, as so many others were, after the pattern of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*,—now nearly thirty years old,—and bearing the accurately imitative title of *Lettres Peruviennes*. A Peruvian comes to Europe, and sends to a friend or mistress in Peru a series of remarks on civilisation. Goldsmith's delightful *Citizen of the World* is the best known type in our own literature of this primitive form of social criticism. The effect upon common opinion of criticism cast in such a mould, presenting familiar habits, institutions, and observances, in a striking and unusual light, was to give a kind of Socratic stimulus to people's ideas about education, civilisation, conduct, and the other topics springing from a comparison between the manners of one community and another. That one of the two, whether Peru, or China, or Persia, was a community drawn mainly from the imagination, did not render the contrast any the less effective in stirring men's minds.

[Pg 66]

By the middle of the century the air was full of ideas upon these social subjects. The temptation was irresistible to turn from the confusion of squalor, oppression, license, distorted organisation, penetrative disorder, to ideal states comprising a little range of simple circumstances, and a small number of types of virtuous and unsophisticated character. Much came of the relief thus sought and found. It was the beginning of the subversive process, for it taught men to look away from ideas of practical amelioration. The genius of Rousseau gave these dreams the shape which, in many respects, so unfortunately for France, finally attracted the bulk of the national sentiment and sympathy. But the vivid, humane, and inspiring pages of *Emile* were not published until ten years after Turgot's letter to Madame de Graffigny:<sup>[24]</sup> a circumstance which may teach us that in moral as in physical discoveries, though one man may take the final step and reap the fame, the conditions have been prepared beforehand. It is almost discouraging to think that we may reproduce such passages as the following, without being open to the charge of slaying the slain, though one hundred and twenty years have elapsed since it was written.

[Pg 67]

'Let Zilia show that our too arbitrary institutions have too often made us forget nature; that we have been the dupes of our own handiwork, and that the savage who does not know how to consult nature knows how to follow her. Let her criticise our pedantry, for it is this that constitutes our education of the present day. Look at the Rudiments; they begin by insisting on stuffing into the heads of children a crowd of the most abstract ideas. Those whom nature in her variety summons to her by all her objects, we fasten up in a single spot, we occupy them on words which cannot convey any sense to them, because the sense of words can only come with ideas, and ideas only come by degrees, starting from sensible objects.<sup>[25]</sup> But, besides, we insist



on their acquiring them without the help that we have had, we whom age and experience have formed. We keep their imagination prisoner, we deprive them of the sight of objects by which nature gives to the savage his first notions of all things, of all the sciences even. We have not the coup-d'œil of nature.

[Pg 68]

'It is the same with morality; general ideas again spoil all. People take great trouble to tell a child that he must be just, temperate, and virtuous; and has it the least idea of virtue? Do not say to your son, *Be virtuous*, but make him find pleasure in being so; develop within his heart the germ of sentiments that nature has placed there.<sup>[26]</sup> There is often much more need for bulwarks against education, than against nature. Give him opportunities of being truthful, liberal, compassionate; rely on the human heart; leave these precious seeds to bloom in the air which surrounds them; do not stifle them under a quantity of frames and network. I am not one of those who want to reject general and abstract ideas; they are necessary; but I by no means think them in their place in our method of instruction. I would have them come to children as they come to men, by degrees.

'Another article of our education, which strikes me as bad and ridiculous, is our severity towards these poor children. They do something silly; we take them up as if it were extremely important. There is a multitude of these follies, of which they will cure themselves by age alone. But people do not count on that; they insist that the son should be well bred, and they overwhelm him with little rules of civility, often frivolous, which can only harass him, as he does not know the reason for them. I think it would be enough to hinder him from being troublesome to the persons that he sees.<sup>[27]</sup> The rest will come, little by little. Inspire him with the desire of pleasing; he will soon know more of the art than all the masters could teach him. People wish again that a child should be grave; they think it wise for it not to run, and fear every moment that it will fall. What happens? You weary and enfeeble it. We have especially forgotten that it is a part of education to form the body.'<sup>[28]</sup>

[Pg 69]

The reader who remembers Locke's Thoughts concerning Education (published in 1690), and the particularly homely prescriptions upon the subjects of the infant body with which that treatise opens, will recognise the source of Turgot's inspiration. The same may be said of the other wise passages in this letter, upon the right attitude of a father towards his child. It was not merely the metaphysics of the sage and positive Locke which laid the revolutionary train in France. This influence extended over the whole field, and even Rousseau confesses the obligations of the imaginary governor of Emile to the real Locke.

[Pg 70]

We are again plainly in the Lockian atmosphere, when Turgot speaks of men being the dupes of 'general ideas, which are true because drawn from nature, but which people embrace with a narrow stiffness that makes them false, because they no longer combine them with circumstances, taking for absolute what is only the expression of a relation.' The merit of this and the other educational parts of the piece, is not their originality, but that kind of complete and finished assimilation which is all but tantamount to independent thought, and which in certain conditions may be much more practically useful.

Not less important to the happiness of men than the manner of their education, is their own cultivation of a wise spirit of tolerance in conduct. 'I should like to see explained,' Turgot says, 'the causes of alienation and disgust between people who love one another. I believe that after living awhile with men, we perceive that bickerings, ill-humours, teasings on trifles, perhaps cause more troubles and divisions among them than serious things. How many bitternesses have their origin in a word, in forgetfulness of some slight observances. If people would only weigh in an exact balance so many little wrongs, if they would only put themselves in the place of those who have to complain of them, if they would only reflect how many times they have themselves given way to humours, how many things they have forgotten! A single word spoken in disparagement of our intelligence is enough to make us irreconcilable, and yet how often have we been deceived in the very same matter. How many persons of understanding have we taken for fools? Why should not others have the same privilege as ourselves?... Ah, what address is needed to live together, to be compliant without cringing, to expose a fault without harshness, to correct without imperious air, to remonstrate without ill-temper!' All this is wise and good, but, alas, as Turgot had occasion by and by to say, little comes of giving rules instead of breeding habits.

[Pg 71]

It is curious that Turgot as early in his career as this should have protested against one of the most dangerous doctrines of the *philosophe* school. 'I have long thought,' he says, 'that our nation needs to have marriage and true marriage preached to it. We contract marriages ignobly, from views of ambition or interest; and as many of them are unhappy in consequence, we may see growing up from day to day a fashion of thinking that is extremely mischievous to the community, to manners, to the stability of families, and to domestic happiness and virtue.'<sup>[29]</sup> Looseness of opinion as to the family and the conditions of its wellbeing and stability, was a flaw that ran through the whole period of revolutionary thought. It was not surprising that the family should come in for its share of destructive criticism, along with the other elements of the established system, but it is a proof of the solidity of Turgot's understanding that he should from the first have detected the mischievousness of this side of the great social attack. Nor did subsequent discussion with the champions of domestic license have any effect upon his opinion.

[Pg 72]

He makes the protest which the moralist makes, and has to make in every age, against the practice of determining the expediency of a marriage by considerations of money or rank. There is a great abuse, he says, in the manner in which marriages are made without the two persons most concerned having any knowledge of one another, and solely under the authority of the

parents, who are guided either by fortune, or else by station, that will one day translate itself into fortune. 'I know,' he says, 'that even marriages of inclination do not always succeed. So from the fact that sometimes people make mistakes in their choice, it is concluded that we ought never to choose.' Condorcet, we may remember, many years after, insisted on the banishment by public opinion of avaricious and mercenary considerations from marriage, as one of the most important means of diminishing the great inequalities in the accumulation of wealth.<sup>[30]</sup>

In the same letter he took sides by anticipation in another cardinal controversy of the epoch, by declaring a preference for the savage over the civilised state to be a 'ridiculous declamation.' This strange and fatal debate had been opened by Rousseau's memorable first Discourse, which was given to the world in 1750. Preference for the savage state was the peculiar form assumed by emotional protests against the existing system of the distribution of wealth. Turgot from first to last resisted the whole spirit of such protests. In this letter, where he makes his first approach to the subject, he insists on inequality of conditions, as alike necessary and useful. It is necessary 'because men are not born equal; because their strength, their intelligence, their passions, would be perpetually overthrowing that momentous equilibrium among them, which the laws might have established.'

[Pg 73]

'What would society be without this inequality of conditions? Each individual would be reduced to mere necessities, or rather there would be very many to whom mere necessities would be by no means assured. Men cannot labour without implements and without the means of subsistence, until the gathering in of the produce. Those who have not had intelligence enough, or any opportunity to acquire these things, have no right to take them away from one who has earned and deserved them by his labour. If the idle and ignorant were to despoil the industrious and the skilful, all works would be discouraged, and misery would become universal. It is alike more just and more useful that all those who have fallen behind either in wit or in good fortune, should lend their right arms to those who know how best to employ them, who can pay them a wage in advance, and guarantee them a share in the future profits.... There is no injustice in this, that a man who has discovered a productive kind of work, and who has supplied his assistants with sustenance and the necessary implements, who for this has only made free contracts with them, should keep back the larger part, and that as payment for his advances he should have less toil and more leisure. It is this leisure which gives him a better chance of revolving schemes, and still further increasing his lights; and what he can economise from his share of the produce, which is with entire equity a larger share, augments his capital, and adds to his power of entering into new undertakings....

[Pg 74]

'What would become of society, if things were not so, and if each person tilled his own little plot? He would also have to build his own house, and make his own clothes. What would the people live upon, who dwell in lands that produce no wheat? Who would transport the productions of one country to another country? The humblest peasant enjoys a multitude of commodities often got together from remote climes.... This distribution of professions necessarily leads to inequality of conditions.'

So early was the rational answer ready for those socialistic sophisms which for so many years misled the most generous part of French intelligence. We may regret perhaps that in demolishing the vision of perfect social equality, Turgot did not show a more lively sense of the need for lessening and softening unavoidable inequalities of condition. However capable these inequalities may be of scientific defence, they are none the less on that account in need of incessant and strenuous practical modification; and it is one of the most serious misfortunes of society, and is unhappily long likely to remain so, that since the absorbing question of the reformation of the economic conditions of the social union has come more and more prominently to the front, gradually but irresistibly thrusting behind both its religious and its political conditions, zeal for the amelioration of the common lot has in so few auspicious instances been according to knowledge; while the professors of science have been more careful to compose narrow apologies for individual selfishness, than to extend as widely as possible the limits set by demonstrable principle to the improvement of the common life.

[Pg 75]

We may notice too in this Letter, what so many of Turgot's allies and friends were disposed to complain of, but what will commend him to a less newly emancipated and therefore a less fanatical generation. There is a conspicuous absence of that peculiar boundlessness of hope, that zealous impatience for the instant realisation and fruition of all the inspirations of philosophic intelligence, which carried others immediately around him so excessively far in the creed of Perfectibility. 'Liberty! I answer with a sigh, maybe that men are not worthy of thee! Equality! They would yearn after thee, but cannot attain!' Compared with the confident exultation and illimitable sense of the worth of man which distinguished that time, there is something like depression here, as in many other places in Turgot's writings. It is usually less articulate, and is rather conveyed by a running undertone, which so often reveals more of a writer's true mood and temper than is seen in his words, giving to them, by some unconscious and inscrutable process, living effects upon the reader's sense like those of eye and voice and accompanying gesture.

[Pg 76]

Dejection, however, is perhaps not the most proper word for the humour of reserved and grave suspense, natural in those rare spirits who have recognised how narrow is the way of truth and how few there be that enter therein, and what prolonged concurrence of favouring hazards with gigantic endeavour is needed for each smallest step in the halting advancement of the race. With Turgot this was not the result of mere sentimental brooding. It had a deliberate and reasoned foundation in historical study. He was patient and not hastily sanguine as to the speedy coming of the millennial future, exactly because history had taught him to measure the laggard paces of the

past. The secret of the intense hopefulness of that time lay in the mournfully erroneous conviction that the one condition of progress is plenteous increase of light. Turgot saw very early that this is not so. *'It is not error,'* he wrote, in a saying that every champion of a new idea should have ever in letters of flame before his eyes, *'which opposes the progress of truth: it is indolence, obstinacy, the spirit of routine, everything that favours inaction.'*<sup>[31]</sup>

[Pg 77]

The others left these potent elements of obstruction out of calculation and account. With Turgot they were the main facts to be considered, and the main forces to be counteracted. It is the mark of the highest kind of union between sagacious, firm, and clear-sighted intelligence, and a warm and steadfast glow of social feeling, when a man has learnt how little the effort of the individual can do either to hasten or direct the current of human destiny, and yet finds in effort his purest pleasure and his most constant duty. If we owe honour to that social endeavour which is stimulated and sustained by an enthusiastic confidence in speedy and full fruition, we surely owe it still more to those, who knowing how remote and precarious and long beyond their own days is the hour of fruit, yet need no other spur nor sustenance than bare hope, and in this strive and endeavour and still endeavour. Here lies the true strength, and it was the possession of this strength and the constant call and strain upon it, which gave Turgot in mien and speech a gravity that revolted the frivolous or indifferent, and seemed cold and timorous to the enthusiastic and urgent. Turgot had discovered that there was a law in the history of men, and he knew how this law limited and conditioned progress.

[Pg 78]

---

## II.

In 1750 Turgot, then only in his twenty-fourth year, was appointed to the honorary office of Prior of the Sorbonne, an elective distinction conferred annually, as it appears, on some meritorious or highly connected student. It was held in the following year by Loménie de Brienne. In this capacity Turgot read two Latin dissertations, one at the opening of the session, and the other at its close. The first of these was upon 'The Advantages that the Establishment of Christianity has conferred upon the Human Race.'

Its value, as might well have been expected from the circumstances of its production, is not very high. It is pitched in a tone of exaltation that is eminently unfavourable to the permanently profitable treatment of such a subject. There are in it too many of those eloquent and familiar commonplaces of orthodox history, by which the doubter tries to warm himself into belief, and the believer dreams that he is corroborating faith by reason. The assembly for whom his discourse was prepared, could hardly have endured the apparition in the midst of them of what both rigorous justice and accurate history required to have taken into account on the other side. It was not to be expected that a young student within the precincts of the Sorbonne should have any eyes for the evil with which the forms of the Christian religion, like other growths of the human mind, from the lowest forms of savage animism upwards, have ever alloyed its good. The absence of all reference to one half of what the annals of the various Christian churches have to teach us, robs the first of Turgot's discourses of that serious and durable quality which belongs to all his other writings.

[Pg 79]

It is fair to point out that the same vicious exclusiveness was practised by the enemies of the Church, and that if history was to one of the two contending factions an exaggerated enumeration of the blessings of Christianity, it was to their passionate rivals only a monotonous catalogue of curses. Of this temper we have a curious illustration in the circumstance that Dupont, Turgot's intimate friend of later years, who collected and published his works, actually took the trouble to suppress the opening of this very Discourse, in which Turgot had replied to the reproach often made against Christianity, of being useful only for a future life.<sup>[32]</sup>

In the first Discourse, Turgot considers the influence of Christianity first upon human nature, and secondly on political societies. One feature at least deserves remark, and this is that in spite both of a settled partiality, and a certain amount of the common form of theology, yet at bottom and putting some phrases apart, religion is handled, and its workings traced, much as they would have been if treated as admittedly secular forces. And this was somewhat. Let us proceed to analyse what Turgot says.

1. Before the preaching and acceptance of the new faith, all nations alike were plunged into the most extravagant superstitions. The most frightful dissoluteness of manners was encouraged by the example of the gods themselves. Every passion and nearly every vice was the object of a monstrous deification. A handful of philosophers existed, who had learnt no better lesson from their reason, than to despise the multitude of their fellows. In the midst of the universal contagion, the Jews alone remained pure. Even the Jews were affected with a narrow and sterile pride, which proved how little they appreciated the priceless treasure that was entrusted to their keeping. What were the effects of the appearance of Christ, and the revelation of the gospel? It inspired men with a tender zeal for the truth, and by establishing the necessity of a body of teachers for the instruction of nations, made studiousness and intellectual application indispensable in a great number of persons.

[Pg 80]

Consider, again, the obscurity, incertitude, and incongruousness, that marked the ideas of the wisest of the ancients upon the nature of man and of God, and the origin of creation; the Ideas of Plato, for instance, the Numbers of Pythagoras, the theurgic extravagances of Plotinus and Porphyry and Iamblichus; and then measure the contributions made by the scholastic theologians, whose dry method has undergone so much severe condemnation, to the instruments by which knowledge is enlarged and made accurate. It was the Church, moreover, which civilised the Northern barbarians, and so preserved the West from the same barbarism and desolation with which the triumphs of Mahometanism replaced the knowledge and arts and prosperity of the East. It is to the services of the Church that we owe the perpetuation of a knowledge of the ancient tongues, and if this knowledge, and the possession of the masterpieces of thought and feeling and form, the flower of the ancient European mind, remained so long unproductive, still religious organisation deserves our gratitude equally for keeping these great treasures for happier times. They survived, as trees stripped by winter of their leaves survive through frost and storm, to give new blossoms in a new spring.

[Pg 81]

This much on the intellectual side; but how can we describe the moral transformation which the new faith brought to pass? Men who had hitherto only regarded gods as beings to be entreated to avert ill or bestow blessing, now learnt the nobler emotion of devout love for a divinity of supreme power and beneficence. The new faith, besides kindling love for God, inflamed the kindred sentiment of love for men, all of whom it declared to be the children of God, one vast family with a common father. Julian himself bore witness to the fidelity with which the Christians, whose faith he hated or despised, tended the sick and fed the poor, not only of their own association, but those also who were without the fold. The horrible practice of exposing new-born infants, which outraged nature, and yet did not touch the heart nor the understanding of a Numa, an Aristotle, a Confucius, was first proscribed by the holy religion of Christ. If shame and misery still sometimes, in the hearts of poor outcast mothers, overpower the horror which Christianity first inspired, it is still the same religion which has opened sheltering places for the unhappy victims of such a practice, and provided means for rearing foundlings into useful citizens.

[Pg 82]

Christian teaching, by reviving the principles of sensibility within the breast, may be said 'to have in some sort unveiled human nature to herself.' If the cruelty of old manners has abated, do we not owe the improvement to such courageous priests as Ambrose, who refused admission into the church to Theodosius, because in punishing a guilty city he had hearkened to the voice rather of wrath than of justice; or as that Pope who insisted that Lewis the Seventh should expiate by a rigorous penance the sack and burning of Vitry.<sup>[33]</sup> It is not to a Titus, a Trajanus, an Antoninus, that we owe the abolition of the bloody gladiatorial games; it is to Jesus Christ. Virtuous unbelievers have not seldom been the apostles of benevolence and humanity, but we rarely see them in the asylums of misery. Reason speaks, but it is religion that makes men act. How much dearer to us than the splendid monuments of antique taste, power, and greatness, are those Gothic edifices reared for the poor and the orphan, those far nobler monuments of the piety of Christian princes and the power of Christian faith. The rudeness of their architecture may wound the delicacy of our taste, but they will be ever beloved by feeling hearts. 'Let others admire in the retreat prepared for those who have sacrificed in battle their lives or their health for the State, all the gathered riches of the arts, displaying in the eyes of all the nations the magnificence of Lewis the Fourteenth, and carrying our renown to the level of that of Greece and Rome. What I will admire is such a use of those arts; the sublime glory of serving the weal of men raises them higher than they had ever been at Rome or at Athens.'

[Pg 83]

2. Let us turn from the action of the Christian faith in modifying the passions of the individual, to its influence upon societies of men. How has Christianity ameliorated the great art of government, with reference to the two characteristic aims of that art, the happiness of communities, and their stability? 'Nature has given all men the right of being happy,' but the old lawgivers abandoned nature's wise economy, by which she uses the desires and interests of individuals to fulfil her general plans and ensure the common weal. Men like Lycurgus destroyed all idea of property, violated the laws of modesty, and annihilated the tenderest ties of blood. A false and mischievous spirit of system seduced them away from the true method, the feeling after experience.<sup>[34]</sup> A general injustice reigned in the laws of all nations; among all of them what was called the public good was confined to a small number of men. Love of country was less the love of fellow-citizens than a common hatred towards strangers. Hence the barbarities practised by the ancients upon their slaves, hence that custom of slavery once spread over the whole earth, those horrible cruelties in the wars of the Greeks and the Romans, that barbarous inequality between the two sexes which still reigns in the East; hence the tyranny of the great towards the common people in hereditary aristocracies, the profound degradation of subject peoples. In short, everywhere the stronger have made the laws and have crushed the weak; and if they have sometimes consulted the interests of a given society, they have always forgotten those of the human race. To recall right and justice, a principle was necessary that could raise men above themselves and all around them, that could lead them to survey all nations and all conditions with an equitable gaze, and in some sort with the eyes of God himself. This is what religion has done. What other principle could have fought and vanquished both interests and prejudice united?

[Pg 84]

Nothing but the Christian religion could have worked that general revolution in men's minds, which brought the rights of humanity out into full day, and reconciled an affectionate preference for the community of which one makes a part, with a general love for mankind. Even the horrors of war were softened, and humanity began to be spared such frightful sequels of triumph, as towns burnt to ashes, populations put to the sword, the wounded massacred in cold blood, or reserved to give a ghastly decoration to triumph. Slavery, where it was not abolished, was

[Pg 85]

constantly and effectively mitigated by Christian sentiment, and the fact that the Church did not peremptorily insist on its universal abolition was due to a wise reluctance to expose the constitution of society to so sudden and violent a shock. Christianity without formal precepts, merely by inspiring a love of justice and mercy in men's hearts, prevented the laws from becoming an instrument of oppression, and held a balance between the strong and the feeble.

If the history of the ancient republics shows that they hardly knew the difference between liberty and anarchy, and if even the profound Aristotle seemed unable to reconcile monarchy with a mild government, is not the reason to be found in the fact that before the Christian era, the various governments of the world only presented either an ambition without bound or limit, or else a blind passion for independence? a perpetual balance between oppression on the one side, and revolt on the other? In vain did lawgivers attempt to arrest this incessant struggle of conflicting passions by laws which were too weak for the purpose, because they were in too imperfect an accord with opinions and manners. Religion, by placing man under the eyes of an all-seeing God, imposed on human passions the only rein capable of effectually bridling them. It gave men internal laws, that were stronger than all the external bonds of the civil laws. By means of this internal change, it has everywhere had the effect of weakening despotism, so that the limits of Christianity seem to mark also the limits of mild government and public felicity. Kings saw the supreme tribunal of a God who should judge them and the cause of their people. Thus the distance between them and their subjects became as nothing in the infinite distance between kings and subjects alike, and the divinity that was equally elevated above either. They were both in some sort equalised by a common abasement. 'Ye nations, be subject to authority,' cried the voice of religion to the one; and to the other it cried, 'Ye kings, who judge the earth, learn that God has only entrusted you with the image of power for the happiness of your peoples.'

[Pg 86]

An eloquent description of the efficacy of Christianity in raising human nature, and impressing on kings the obligation of pursuing above all things the wellbeing of their subjects, closes with a courtly official salutation of the virtues of that Very Christian King, Lewis the Fifteenth.

---

'It is ill reasoning against religion,' an illustrious contemporary of Turgot's had said, in a deprecatory sentence that serves to mark the spirit of the time; 'to compile a long list of the evils which it has inflicted, without doing the same for the blessings which it has bestowed.'<sup>[35]</sup> Conversely we may well think it unphilosophical and unconvincing to enumerate all the blessings without any of the evils; to tell us how the Christian doctrine enlarged the human spirit, without observing what narrowing limitations it imposed; to dwell on all the mitigating influences with which the Christian churches have been associated, while forgetting all the ferocities which they have inspired. The history of European belief offers a double record since the decay of polytheism, and if for a certain number of centuries this record shows the civilisation of men's instincts by Christianity, it reveals to us in the centuries subsequent, the reverse process of the civilisation of Christianity by men's instincts. Turgot's piece treats half the subject as if it were the whole. He extends down to the middle of the eighteenth century a number of propositions and implied inferences, which are only true up to the beginning of the fourteenth.

[Pg 87]

Even within this limitation there are many questions that no student of Turgot's capacity would now overlook, yet of which he and the most reasonable spirits of his age took no cognisance. The men of neither side in the eighteenth century knew what the history of opinion meant. All alike concerned themselves with its truth or falsehood, with what they counted to be its abstract fitness or unfitness. A perfect method places a man where he can command one point of view as well as the other, and can discern not only how far an idea is true and convenient, but also how, whether true and convenient or otherwise, it came into its place in men's minds. We ought to be able to separate in thought the question of the grounds and evidence for a given dogma being true, from the distinct and purely historic question of the social and intellectual conditions which made men accept it for true.

[Pg 88]

Where, however, there was any question of the two religions whose document and standards are professedly drawn from the Bible, there the Frenchmen of that time assumed not a historic attitude, but one exclusively dogmatic. Everybody was so anxious to prove, that he had neither freedom nor humour to observe. The controversy as to the exact measure of the supernatural force in Judaism and its Christian development was so overwhelmingly absorbing, as to leave without light or explanation the wide and independent region of their place as simply natural forces. It may be said, and perhaps it is true, that people never allow the latter side of the inquiry to become prominent in their minds until they have settled the former, and settled it in one way: they must be indifferent to the details of the natural operations of a religion, until they are convinced that there are none of any other kind. Be this as it may, we have to record the facts. And it is difficult to imagine a Frenchman of the era of the Encyclopædia asking himself the sort of questions which now present themselves to the student in such abundance. For instance, has one effect of Christianity been to exalt a regard for the Sympathetic over the Æsthetic side of action and character? And if so, to what elements in the forms of Christian teaching and practice is this due? And is such a transfer of the highest place from the beauty to the loveliness of conduct to be accounted a gain, when contrasted with the relative position of the two sides among the Greeks and Romans?

[Pg 89]

Again, we have to draw a distinction between the Christian idea and the outward Christian organisation, and between the consequences to human nature and society which flowed from the

first, and the advantages which may be traced to the second. There was on the one hand a doctrine, stirring dormant spiritual instincts, and satisfying active spiritual needs; on the other an external institution, preserving, interpreting, developing, and applying the doctrine. Each of the two has its own origin, its own history, its own destiny in the memories of the race. We may attempt to estimate the functions of the one, without pronouncing on the exact value of the other. If the idea was the direct gift of heaven, the policy was due to the sagacity and mother-wit of the great ecclesiastical statesmen. If the doctrine was a supernatural boon, at least the forms in which it came gradually to overspread Europe were to be explained on rational and natural grounds. And if historical investigation of these forms and their influences should prove that they are the recognisable roots of most of the benign growths which are vaguely styled results of Christianity, then such a conclusion would seriously attenuate the merits of the supernatural Christian doctrine in favour of the human Christian policy.

[Pg 90]

If there had been in the Christian idea the mysterious self-sowing quality so constantly claimed for it, how came it that in the Eastern part of the Empire it was as powerless for spiritual or moral regeneration as it was for political health and vitality, while in the Western part it became the organ of the most important of all the past transformations of the civilised world? Is not the difference to be explained by the difference in the surrounding medium, and what is the effect of such an explanation upon the supernatural claims of the Christian idea? Does such an explanation reduce that idea to the rank of one of the historic forces, which arise and operate and expand themselves in accordance with strictly natural conditions? The Christianity of the East was probably as degraded a form of belief, as lowering for human character, and as mischievous to social wellbeing, as has ever been held by civilised peoples. Yet the East, strangely enough, was the great home and nursery of all that is most distinctive in the constituent ideas of the Christian faith. Why, in meditating on Christianity, are we to shut our eyes to the depravation that overtook it when placed amid unfavourable social conditions, and to confine our gaze to the brighter qualities which it developed in the healthier atmosphere of the West?

Further, Turgot might have asked with much profit to the cause of historic truth, and perhaps in more emancipated years he did ask, whether economic circumstances have not had more to do with the dissolution of slavery than Christian doctrines:—whether the rise of rent from free tenants over the profits to be drawn from slave-labour by the landowner, has not been a more powerful stimulant to emancipation, than the moral maxim that we ought to love one another, or the Christian proposition that we are all equals before the divine throne and co-heirs of salvation:—whether a steady and permanent fall in the price of slave-raised productions had not as much to do with the decay of slavery in Europe, as the love of God or the doctrine of human brotherhood.<sup>[36]</sup> That the influence of Christianity, so far as it went, and, so far as it was a real power, tended both to abolish slavery, and, where it was too feeble to press in this direction, at any rate tended to mitigate the harshness of its usages, is hardly to be denied by any fair-minded person. The true issue is what this influence amounted to. The orthodox historian treats it as single and omnipotent. His heterodox brother—in the eighteenth century they both usually belonged to one family—leaves it out.

[Pg 91]

The crowded annals of human misery, as well as the more terrible chronicle of the consequences when misery has impatiently betaken itself to the cruel arm of flesh, show the decisive importance of the precise way in which a great subject of debate is put. Now the whole question of religion was in those days put with radical incompleteness, and Turgot's dissertation was only in a harmony that might have been expected with the prevailing error. The champions of authority, like the leaders of the revolt, insisted on inquiring absolutely, not relatively; on judging religion with reference to human nature in the abstract, instead of with reference to the changing varieties of social institution and circumstance. We ought to place ourselves where we can see both lines of inquiry to be possible. We ought to place ourselves where we can ask what the tendencies of Christian influence have been, without mixing up with that question the further and distinct inquiry what these tendencies are now, or are likely to be. The nineteenth century has hitherto leaned to the historical and relative aspect of the great controversy. The eighteenth was characteristically dogmatic, and the destroyers of the faith were not any less dogmatic in their own way, than those who professed to be its apologists.

[Pg 92]

---

Probably it was not long after the composition of this apologetic thesis, before Turgot became alive to the precise position of a creed which had come to demand apologetic theses. This was, indeed, one of the marked and critical moments in the great transformation of religious feeling and ecclesiastical order in Europe, of which our own age, four generations later, is watching a very decisive, if not a final stage. Turgot's demonstration of the beneficence of Christianity was delivered in July 1750—almost the exact middle of the eighteenth century. The death of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, ten years before, had given the signal for the break-up of the European system. The iron army of Prussia made its first stride out of the narrow northern borders, into the broad arena of the West, and every new illustration of the fortitude and depth and far-reaching power of Prussia has been a new blow to the old Catholic organisation. The first act of this prodigious drama closed while Turgot was a pupil at the Sorbonne. The court of France had blundered into alliances against the retrograde and Catholic house of Austria, while England, with equal blindness, had stumbled into friendship with it. Before the opening of the second act or true climax—that is, before the Seven Years' War began—interests and forces became more naturally adjusted. France, Spain, and Austria, Bourbons and Hapsburgs, the great

[Pg 93]

pillars of the Church, were ranged against England and Prussia, the half-conscious representatives of those industrial and individualist principles which replaced, whether for a time or permanently, the decaying system of aristocratic caste in temporal things, and an ungrowing Catholicism in things spiritual. In 1750 ecclesiastical far-sightedness, court intrigue, and family ambitions, were actively preparing the way for the Austrian alliance in the mephitic air of Versailles. The issue at stake was the maintenance of the supremacy of the Church, and the ancient Christian organisation of France and of Europe.

[Pg 94]

We now know how this long battle has gone. The Jesuit Churchmen lost their lead, and were thrown back out of the civil and political sphere. We know, too, what effect these blows to the Catholic organisation have had upon the activity of the Catholic idea. With the decline and extermination of the predominance of Churchmen in civil affairs, there began a tendency, which has since become deeper and stronger, in the Church to withdraw herself and her sons from a sphere where she could no longer be sovereign and queen. Religion, since the Revolution, isolates the most devout Catholics from political action and political interests. This great change, however, this return of the leaders of the Christian society upon the original conceptions of the Christian faith, did not come to pass in Turgot's time. He watched the struggle of the Church for the maintenance of its temporal privilege and honour, and for the continued protection by secular power of its spiritual supremacy. The outcome of the struggle was later.

We may say, in fine, that if this first public composition of Turgot's is extremely imperfect, it was better to exaggerate the services of Christianity, alike as an internal faith and as a peculiar form of social organisation, than to describe Gregory the Great and Innocent, Hildebrand and Bernard, as artful and vulgar tyrants, and Aquinas and Roger Bacon as the products of a purely barbarous, stationary, and dark age. There is at first sight something surprising in the respect which Turgot's ablest contemporaries paid to the contributions made to progress by Greece and Rome, compared with their angry disparagement of the dark ages. The reason of this contrast we soon discover to be that the passions of present contests gave their own colour to men's interpretation of the circumstances of the remote middle time, between the Roman Empire and the commencement of the revolutionary period. Turgot escaped these passions more completely than any man of his time who was noble enough to be endowed with the capacity for passion. He never forgot that it is as wise and just to confess the obligations of mankind to the Catholic monotheism of the West, as it is shallow and unjust in professors of Christianity to despise or hate the lower theological systems which guide the humbler families of mankind.

[Pg 95]

Let us observe that only three years after this academic discourse in praise of the religion of the time, Turgot was declaring that 'the greatest of the services of Christianity to the world was that it had both enlightened and propagated *natural religion*.'<sup>[37]</sup>

---

### III.

Turgot's inquiry into the extent and quality of the debt of European civilisation to Christianity was marked by a certain breadth and largeness, in spite of the bonds of circumstance and subject—for who, after all, can consider Christianity to any purpose, apart from other conditions of general progress, or without free comparison with other dogmatic systems? It is not surprising, then, to find the same valuable gifts of vision coming into play with a thousand times greater liberty and power, when the theme was widened so as to comprehend the successive steps of the advancement of the human mind in all its aspects. The Second and more famous of the two Discourses at the Sorbonne was read in December 1750, and professes to treat the Successive Advances of the Human Mind.<sup>[38]</sup> The opening lines are among the most pregnant, as they were among the most original, in the history of literature, and reveal in an outline, standing clear against the light, a thought which revolutionised old methods of viewing and describing the course of human affairs, and contained the germs of a new and most fruitful philosophy of society.

[Pg 96]

'The phenomena of nature, subjected as they are to constant laws, are enclosed in a circle of revolutions that remain the same for ever. All comes to life again, all perishes again; and in these successive generations, by which vegetables and animals reproduce themselves, time does no more than bring back at each moment the image of what it has just dismissed.

'The succession of men, on the contrary, offers from age to age a spectacle of continual variations. Reason, freedom, the passions, are incessantly producing new events. *All epochs are fastened together by a sequence of causes and effects, linking the condition of the world to all the conditions that have gone before it.* The gradually multiplied signs of speech and writing, giving men an instrument for making sure of the continued possession of their ideas, as well as of imparting them to others, have formed out of the knowledge of each individual a common treasure, which generation transmits to generation, as an inheritance constantly augmented by the discoveries of each age; and the human race, observed from its first beginning, seems in the eyes of the philosopher to be one vast whole, which, like each individual in it, has its infancy and its growth.'

[Pg 97]

This was not a mere casual reflection in Turgot's mind, taking a solitary and separate position among those various and unordered ideas, which spring up and go on existing without visible fruit in every active intelligence. It was one of the systematic conceptions which shape and rule

many groups of facts, fixing a new and high place of their own for them among the great divisions of knowledge. In a word, it belonged to the rare order of truly creative ideas, and was the root or germ of a whole body of vigorous and connected thought. This quality marks the distinction, in respect of the treatment of history, between Turgot, and both Bossuet and the great writers of history in France and England in the eighteenth century. Many of the sayings to which we are referred for the origin of the modern idea of history, such as Pascal's for instance, are the fortuitous glimpses of men of genius into a vast sea, whose extent they have not been led to suspect, and which only make a passing and momentary mark. Bossuet's talk of universal history, which has been so constantly praised, was fundamentally, and in substance, no more than a bit of theological commonplace splendidly decorated. He did indeed speak of 'the concatenation of human affairs,' but only in the same sentence with 'the sequence of the counsels of God.' The gorgeous rhetorician of the Church was not likely to rise philosophically into the larger air of universal history, properly so called. His famous Discourse is a vindication of divine foresight, by means of an intensely narrow survey of such sets of facts as might be thought not inconsistent with the deity's fixed purpose to make one final and decisive revelation to men. No one who looks upon the vast assemblage of stupendous human circumstances, from the first origin of man upon the earth, as merely the ordained antecedent of what, seen from the long procession of all the ages, figures in so diminutive a consummation as the Catholic Church, is likely to obtain a very effective hold of that broad sequence and many-linked chain of events, to which Bossuet gave a right name, but whose real meaning he never was even near seizing. His merit is that he did in a small and rhetorical way what Montesquieu and Voltaire afterwards did in a truly comprehensive and philosophical way; he pressed forward general ideas in connection with the recorded movements of the chief races of mankind. For a teacher of history to leave the bare chronicler's road so far as to declare, for example, the general principle, inadequate and over-stated as it is, that 'religion and civil government are the two points on which human things revolve,'—even this was a clear step in advance. The dismissal of the long series of emperors from Augustus to Alexander Severus in two or three pages was to show a ripe sense of large historic proportion. Again, Bossuet's expressions of 'the concatenation of the universe,' of the interdependence of the parts of so vast a whole, of there coming no great change without having its causes in foregoing centuries, and of the true object of history being to observe, in connection with each epoch, those secret dispositions of events which prepared the way for great changes, as well as the momentous conjunctures which more immediately brought them to pass<sup>[39]</sup>—all these phrases seem to point to a true and philosophic survey. But they end in themselves, and lead nowhither. The chain is an arbitrary and one-sided collection of facts. The writer does not cautiously follow and feel after the successive links, but forges and chooses and arrays them after a pattern of his own, which was fixed independently of them. A scientific term or two is not enough to disguise the purely theological essence of the treatise.

[Pg 98]

[Pg 99]

Montesquieu and Voltaire were both far enough removed from Bossuet's point of view, and the *Spirit of Laws* of the one, and the *Essay on the Manners and Character of Nations* of the other, mark a very different way of considering history from the lofty and confident method of the orthodox rhetorician. The *Spirit of Laws* was published in 1748, that is to say a couple of years before Turgot's Discourse at the Sorbonne. Voltaire's *Essay on Manners* did not come out until 1757, or seven years later than the Discourse; but Voltaire himself has told us that its composition dates from 1740, when he prepared this new presentation of European history for the service of Madame du Châtelet.<sup>[40]</sup> We may hence fairly consider the cardinal work of Montesquieu, and the cardinal historical work of Voltaire, as virtually belonging to the same time. And they possess a leading character in common, which separates them both from Turgot, and places them relatively to his idea in a secondary rank. In a word, Montesquieu and Voltaire, if we have to search their most distinctive quality, introduced into history systematically, and with full and decisive effect, a broad generality of treatment. They grouped the facts of history; and they did not group them locally or in accordance with mere geographical or chronological division, but collected the facts in social classes and orders from many countries and times. Their work was a work of classification. It showed the possibility of arranging the manifold and complex facts of society, and of the movements of communities, under heads and with reference to definite general conditions.

[Pg 100]

[Pg 101]

There is no need here to enter into any criticism of Montesquieu's great work, how far the merits of its execution equalled the merit of its design, how far his vicious confusion of the senses of the word 'law' impaired the worth of his book, as a contribution to inductive or comparative history. We have only to seek the difference between the philosophic conception of Montesquieu and the philosophic conception of Turgot. The latter may be considered a more liberal completion of the former. Turgot not only sees the operation of law in the movements and institutions of society, but he interprets this law in a positive and scientific sense, as an ascertainable succession of social states, each of them being the cause and effect of other social states. Turgot gives its deserved prominence to the fertile idea of there being an ordered movement of growth or advance among societies; in other words, of the civilisation of any given portion of mankind having fixed conditions analogous to those of a physical organism. Finally, he does not limit his thought by fixing it upon the laws and constitutions only of countries, but refers historical philosophy to its veritable and widest object and concern, the steps and conditions of the progression of the human mind.

How, he inquires, can we seize the thread of the progress of the human mind? How trace the road, now overgrown and half-hidden, along which the race has travelled? Two ideas suggest themselves, which lay foundations for this inquiry. For one thing, the resources of nature and the fruitful germ of all sorts of knowledge are to be found wherever men are to be found. 'The

[Pg 102]



sublimest attainments are not, and cannot be, other than the first ideas of sense developed or combined, just as the edifice whose height most amazes the eye, of necessity reposes on the very earth that we tread; and the same senses, the same organs, the spectacle of the same universe, have everywhere given men the same ideas, as the same needs and the same dispositions have everywhere taught them the same arts.' Or it might be put in other words. There is identity in human nature, and repetition in surrounding circumstance means the reproduction of social consequences. For another thing, 'the actual state of the universe, by presenting at the same moment on the earth all the shades of barbarism and civilisation, discloses to us as in a single glance the monuments, the footprints of all the steps of the human mind, the measure of the whole track along which it has passed, the history of all the ages.'

The progress of the human mind means to Turgot the progress of knowledge. Its history is the history of the growth and spread of science and the arts. Its advance is increased enlightenment of the understanding. From Adam and Eve down to Lewis the Fourteenth, the record of progress is the chronicle of the ever-increasing additions to the sum of what men know, and the accuracy and fulness with which they know. The chief instrument in this enlightenment is the rising up from time to time of some lofty and superior intelligence; for though human character contains everywhere the same principle, yet certain minds are endowed with a peculiar abundance of talent that is refused to others. 'Circumstances develop these superior talents, or leave them buried in obscurity; and from the infinite variety of these circumstances springs the inequality among nations.' The agricultural stage goes immediately before a decisively polished state, because it is then first that there is that surplus of means of subsistence, which allows men of higher capacity the leisure for using it in the acquisition of knowledge, properly so called.

[Pg 103]

One of the greatest steps was the precious invention of writing, and one of the most rapid was the constitution of mathematical knowledge. The sciences that came next matured more slowly, because in mathematics the explorer has only to compare ideas among one another, while in the others he has to test the conformity of ideas to objective facts. Mathematical truths, becoming more numerous every day, and increasingly fruitful in proportion, lead to the development of hypotheses at once more extensive and more exact, and point to new experiments, which in their turn furnish new problems to solve. 'So necessity perfects the instrument; so mathematics finds support in physics, to which it lends its lamp; so all knowledge is bound together; so, notwithstanding the diversity of their advance, all the sciences lend one another mutual aid; and so, by force of feeling a way, of multiplying systems, of exhausting errors, so to speak, the world at length arrives at the knowledge of a vast number of truths.' It might seem as if a prodigious confusion, as of tongues, would arise from so enormous an advance along so many lines. 'The different sciences, originally confined within a few simple notions common to all, can now, after their advance into more extensive and difficult ideas, only be surveyed apart. But an advance, greater still, brings them together again, because that mutual dependence of all truths is discovered, which, while it links them one to another, throws light on one by another.'

[Pg 104]

Alas, the history of opinion is, in one of its most extensive branches, the history of error. The senses are the single source of our ideas, and furnish its models to the imagination. Hence that nearly incorrigible disposition to judge what we are ignorant of by what we know; hence those deceptive analogies to which the primitive rudeness of men surrenders itself. '*As they watched nature, as their eyes wandered to the surface of a profound ocean, instead of the far-off bed hidden under the waters, they saw nothing but their own likeness.* Every object in nature had its god, and this god formed after the pattern of men, had men's attributes and men's vices.'<sup>[41]</sup> Here, in anthropomorphism, or the transfer of human quality to things not human, and the invention of spiritual existences to be the recipients of this quality, Turgot justly touched the root of most of the wrong thinking that has been as a manacle to science.

[Pg 105]

His admiration for those epochs in which new truths were most successfully discovered, and old fallacies most signally routed, did not prevent Turgot from appreciating the ages of criticism and their services to knowledge. He does full justice to Alexandria, not only for its astronomy and geometry, but for that peculiar studiousness 'which exercises itself less on things than on books; whose strength lies less in producing and discovering, than in collecting and comparing and estimating what has been produced and discovered; which does not press forward, but gazes backward along the road that has already been traversed. The studies that require most genius, are not always those which imply most progress in the mass of men. There are minds to which nature has given a memory capable of comparing truths, of suggesting an arrangement that places these truths in the fullest light; but to which, at the same time, she has refused that ardour of genius which insists on inventing and opening out for itself new lines of discovery. Made to unite former discoveries under a single point of view, to surround them with light, and to exhibit them in entire perfection, if they are not luminaries that burn and sparkle of themselves, at least they are like diamonds that reflect with dazzling brilliance a borrowed light.'

[Pg 106]

Thus Turgot's conception of progress regards it mainly, if not entirely, as a gradual dawn and diffusion of light, the spreading abroad of the rays of knowledge. He does not assert, as some moderns have crudely asserted, that morality is of the nature of a fixed quantity; still he hints something of the kind. 'Morality,' he says, speaking of Greece in the time of its early physical speculation, 'though still imperfect, still kept fewer relics of the infancy of reason. Those ever-springing necessities which so incessantly recall man to society, and force him to bend to its laws, that instinct, that sentiment of what is good and right, which Providence has engraved in all hearts, and which precedes reason, all lead the thinkers of every time back to the same fundamental principles of the science of morals.'

We meet with this limitation of the idea of progress in every member of the school to which, more than to any other, Turgot belonged. Even in the vindication of the claims of Christianity to the gratitude of mankind, he had forbore from laying stress on any original contribution, supposed to be made by that religion to the precious stock of ethical ideas. He dwells upon the 'tender zeal for the progress of truth that the Christian religion inspired,' and recounts the various circumstances in which it spread and promoted the social and political conditions most favourable to intellectual or scientific activity. Whatever may be the truth or the value of Christianity as a dogmatic system, there can be little doubt that its weight as a historic force is to be looked for, not so much in the encouragement it gave to science and learning, in respect of which Western Europe probably owes more to Mahometanism, as in the high and generous types of character which it inspired. A man of rare moral depth, warmth, or delicacy, may be a more important element in the advance of civilisation, than the newest and truest deduction from what Turgot calls 'the fundamental principles of the science of morals.' The leading of souls to do what is right and humane, is always more urgent than mere instruction of the intelligence as to what exactly is the right and the humane. The saint after all has a place in positive history; but the men of the eighteenth century passionately threw him out from their calendar, as the mere wooden idol of superstition. They eagerly recognised the genius of scientific discovery; but they had no eyes for the genius of moral holiness. Turgot, far as he was from many of the narrownesses of his time, yet did not entirely transcend this, the worst of them all. And because he could not perceive there to be any new growths in moral science, he left out from a front place among the forces that have given strength and ripeness to the human mind, the superior capacity of some men for kindling, by word and example, the glowing love and devout practice of morality in the breasts of many generations of their fellows.

[Pg 107]

The mechanical arts, Turgot says, were preserved in the dark ages by the necessities of existence, and because 'it is impossible but that out of the crowd of artisans practising them, there should arise from time to time one of those men of genius who are found mingled with other men, as gold is found mingled with the earth of a mine.' Surely in the same way holy men arose, with keener feeling for the spiritual necessities of the time, and finer knowledge to train and fit the capacities of human nature to meet these needs, and make their satisfaction the basis for yet loftier standards and holier aspirations and nobler and more careful practice. The work of all such men deserved a place in an outline of the progressive forces of the human mind, as much as the work of those who invented bills of exchange, the art of musical notation, windmills, clocks, gunpowder, and all the other material instruments for multiplying the powers of man and the conveniences of life.

[Pg 108]

Even if we give Turgot the benefit of the doubt whether he intended to describe more than the progress of the human intelligence, or the knowing part of the mind, the omission of the whole moral side is still a defect. For as he interprets knowledge to be the conformity of our ideas to facts, has there not been a clearly recognisable progress in the improved conformity of our ideas to the most momentous facts of all, the various circumstances of human action, its motives and consequences? No factor among the constituents of a progressive civilisation deserves more carefully to be taken into account, than the degree in which the current opinion and usage of a society recognise the comprehensiveness of moral obligation. More than upon anything else, does progress depend on the kinds of conduct which a community classifies as moral or immoral, and upon the wider or narrower inclusiveness within rigid ethical boundaries of what ought or ought not to be left open and indifferent. The conditions which create and modify these ethical regulations,—their law in a word,—form a department of the history of the human mind, which can be almost less readily dispensed with than any other. What sort of a history of Europe would that be, which should omit, for example, to consider the influence of the moral rigour of Calvinism upon the growth of the nations affected by it?

[Pg 109]

Moreover, Turgot expressly admits the ever-present wants of society to be the stimulating agents, as well as the guides, of scientific energy. He expressly admits, too, that they are constantly plucking men by the skirt, and forcing them back to social rules of conduct. It is certain, therefore, that as the necessities of society increase in number and complexity, morality will be developed to correspond with them, and the way in which new applications of ethical sentiments to the demands of the common weal are made, is as interesting and as deserving of a place in any scientific inquiry into social progress, as the new applications of physical truths to satisfy material needs and to further material convenience. Turgot justly points to the perfecting of language as one of the most important of the many processes that go to the general advancement of the race.<sup>[42]</sup> Not less, but more, important is the analogous work of perfecting our ideas of virtue and duty. Surely this chamber, too, in the great laboratory deserves that the historian should unseal its door and explore its recesses.

[Pg 110]

The characteristic merits of the second of the two discourses at the Sorbonne may be briefly described in this way. It recognises the idea of ordered succession in connection with the facts of society. It considers this succession as one, not of superficial events, but of working forces. Thus Bolingbroke, writing fifteen years before, had said that 'as to events that stand recorded in history, we see them all, we see them as they followed one another, or as they produced one another, causes or effects, immediate or remote.'<sup>[43]</sup> But it is very evident from his illustrations that by all this he understood no more than the immediate connection between one transaction and another. He thought, for example, of the Revolution of 1688 being a consequence of the bad government of James the Second; of this bad government springing from the king's attachment to popery; this in turn being caused by the exile of the royal family; this exile having its source in Cromwell's usurpation; and so forth, one may suppose, down to the Noachian flood, or the era

when the earth was formless and void. It is mere futility to talk of cause and effect in connection with a string of arbitrarily chosen incidents of this sort. Cause and effect, in Turgot's sense of history, describe a relation between certain sets or groups of circumstances, that are of a peculiarly decisive kind, because the surface of events conforms itself to their inner working. His account of these deciding circumstances was not what we should be likely to accept now, because he limited them too closely to purely intellectual acquisitions, as we have just seen, and because he failed to see the necessity of tracing the root of the whole growth to certain principles in the mental constitution of mankind. But, at all events, his conception of history rose above merely individual concerns, embraced the successive movements of societies and their relations to one another, and sought the spring of revolutions in the affairs of a community in long trains of preparing conditions, internal and external. Above all, history was a whole. The fortunes and achievements of each nation were scrutinised for their effect on the growth of all mankind.

[Pg 111]

---

#### IV.

In the year 1761, Turgot, then in his thirty-fourth year, was appointed to the office of Intendant in the Generality of Limoges. There were three different divisions of France in the eighteenth century: first and oldest, the diocese or ecclesiastical circumscription; second, the province or military government; and third, the Generality, or a district defined for fiscal and administrative purposes. The Intendant in the government of the last century was very much what the Prefect is in the government of our own time. Perhaps, however, we understand Turgot's position in Limousin best, by comparing it to that of the Chief Commissioner of some great district in our Indian Empire. For example, the first task which Turgot had to perform was to execute a new land-assessment for purposes of imperial revenue. He had to construct roads, to build barracks, to administer justice, to deal with a famine, just as the English civilian has to do in Orissa or Behar. Much of his time was taken up in elaborate memorials to the central government, and the desk of the controller-general at Versailles was loaded with minutes and reports exactly like the voluminous papers which fill the mahogany boxes of the Members of Council and the Home Secretary at Calcutta. The fundamental conditions of the two systems of government were much alike; absolute political authority, and an elaborately centralised civil administration for keeping order and raising a revenue. The direct authority of an Intendant was not considerable. His chief functions were the settlement of detail in executing the general orders that he received from the minister; a provisional decision on certain kinds of minor affairs; and a power of judging some civil suits, subject to appeal to the Council. But though the Intendant was so strictly a subordinate, yet he was the man of the government, and thoroughly in its confidence. The government only saw with his eyes, and only acted on the faith of his reports, memorials, and requisitions; and this in a country where the government united in itself all forms of power, and was obliged to be incessantly active and to make itself felt at every point.

[Pg 112]

[Pg 113]

Of all the thirty-two great districts in which the authority of the Intendant stood between the common people and the authority of the minister at Versailles, the Generality of Limoges was the poorest, the rudest, the most backward, and the most miserable. To the eye of the traveller with a mind for the picturesque, there were parts of this central region of France whose smiling undulations, delicious water-scenes, deep glens extending into amphitheatres, and slopes hung with woods of chestnut, all seemed to make a lovelier picture than the cheerful beauty of prosperous Normandy, or the olive-groves and orange-gardens of Provence. Arthur Young thought the Limousin the most beautiful part of France. Unhappily for the cultivator, these gracious conformations belonged to a harsh and churlish soil. For him the roll of the chalk and the massing of the granite would have been well exchanged for the fat loams of level Picardy. The soil of the Limousin was declared by its inhabitants to be the most ungrateful in the whole kingdom, returning no more than four net for one of seed sown, while there was land in the vale of the Garonne that returned thirty-fold. The two conditions for raising tolerable crops were abundance of labour and abundance of manure. But misery drove the men away, and the stock were sold to pay the taxes. So the land lacked both the arms of the tiller, and the dressing whose generous chemistry would have transmuted the dull earth into fruitfulness and plenty. The extent of the district was estimated at a million and a half of hectares, equivalent to nearly four millions of English acres: yet the population of this vast tract was only five hundred thousand souls. Even to-day it is not more than eight hundred thousand.

[Pg 114]

The common food of the people was the chestnut, and to the great majority of them even the coarsest rye-bread was a luxury that they had never tasted. Maise and buckwheat were their chief cereals, and these, together with a coarse radish, took up hundreds of acres that might under a happier system have produced fine wheat and nourished fruit-trees. There had once been a certain export of cattle, but that had now come to an end, partly because the general decline of the district had impaired the quality of the beasts, and partly because the Parisian butchers, who were by much the greatest customers, had found the markets of Normandy more convenient. The more the trade went down, the heavier was the burden of the cattle-tax on the stock that remained. The stock-dealer was thus ruined from both sides at once. In the same way, the Limousin horses, whose breed had been famous all over France, had ceased to be an object of commerce, and the progressive increase of taxation had gradually extinguished the trade. Angoumois, which formed part of the Generality of Limoges, had previously boasted of producing the best and finest paper in the world, and it had found a market not only throughout France, but

[Pg 115]

all over Europe. There had been a time when this manufacture supported sixty mills; at the death of Lewis XIV. their number had fallen from sixty to sixteen. An excise duty at the mill, a duty on exportation at the provincial frontier, a duty on the importation of rags over the provincial frontier,—all these vexations had succeeded in reducing the trade with Holland, one of France's best customers, to one-fourth of its previous dimensions. Nor were paper and cattle the only branches of trade that had been blighted by fiscal perversity. The same burden arrested the transport of saffron across the borders of the province, on its way to Hungary and Prussia and the other cold lands where saffron was a favourite condiment. Salt which came up the Charente from the marshes by the coast, was stripped of all its profit, first by the duty paid on crossing from the Limousin to Périgord and Auvergne, and next by the right possessed by certain of the great lords on the banks of the Charente to help themselves at one point and another to portions of the cargo. Iron was subject to a harassing excise in all those parts of the country that were beyond the jurisdiction of the parlement of Bordeaux. The effect of such positive hindrances as these to the transit of goods was further aided, to the destruction of trade, by the absence of roads. There were four roads in the province, but all of them so bad that the traveller knew not whether to curse more lustily the rocks or the swamps that interrupted his journey alternately. There were two rivers, the Vienne and the Vézère, and these might seem to an enthusiast for the famous argument from Design, as if Nature had intended them for the transport of timber from the immense forests that crowned the Limousin hills. Unluckily, their beds were so thickly bestrewn with rock that neither of them was navigable for any considerable part of its long course through the ill-starred province.

[Pg 116]

The inhabitants were as cheerless as the land on which they lived. They had none of the fiery energy, the eloquence, the mobility of the people of the south. Still less were they endowed with the apt intelligence, the ease, the social amiability, the openness, of their neighbours on the north. 'The dwellers in Upper Limousin,' said one who knew them, 'are coarse and heavy, jealous, distrustful, avaricious.' The dwellers in Lower Limousin had a less repulsive address, but they were at least as narrowly self-interested at heart, and they added a capacity for tenacious and vindictive hatred. The Limousins had the superstitious doctrines of other semi-barbarous populations, and they had their vices. They passed abruptly and without remorse from a penitential procession to the tavern and the brothel. Their Christianity was as superficial as that of the peasant of the Eifel in our own day, or of the Finnish converts of whom we are told that they are even now not beyond sacrificing a foal in honour of the Virgin Mary. Saint Martial and Saint Leonard were the patron saints of the country, and were the objects of an adoration in comparison with which the other saints, and even God himself, were thrust into a secondary place.

[Pg 117]

In short, the people of the Generality of Limoges represented the most unattractive type of peasantry. They were deeply superstitious, violent in their prejudices, obstinate withstanders of all novelty, rude, dull, stupid, perverse, and hardly redeeming a narrow and blinding covetousness by a stubborn and mechanical industry. Their country has been fixed upon as the cradle of Celtic nationality in France, and there are some who believe that here the old Gaulish blood kept itself purer from external admixture than was the case anywhere else in the land. In our own day, when an orator has occasion to pay a compliment to the townsmen of Limoges, he says that the genius of the people of the district has ever been faithful to its source; it has ever held the balance true between the Frank tradition of the north, and the Roman tradition of the south. This makes an excellent period for a rhetorician, but the fact which it conveys made Limousin all the severer a task for an administrator. Almost immediately after his appointment, Turgot had the chance of being removed to Rouen, and after that to Lyons. Either of these promotions would have had the advantages of a considerable increase of income, less laborious duties, and a much more agreeable residence. Turgot, with a high sense of duty that probably seemed quixotic enough to the Controller-General, declined the preferment, on the very ground of the difficulty and importance of the task that he had already undertaken. '*Poor peasants, poor kingdom!*' had been Quesnay's constant exclamation, and it had sunk deep into the spirit of his disciple. He could have little thought of high salary or personal ease, when he discerned an opportunity of improving the hard lot of the peasant, and softening the misfortunes of the realm.

[Pg 118]

Turgot was one of the men to whom good government is a religion. It might be said to be the religion of all the best men of that century, and it was natural that it should be so. The decay of a theology that places our deepest solitudes in a sphere beyond this, is naturally accompanied by a transfer of these high solitudes to a nearer scene. But though the desire for good government, and a right sense of its cardinal importance, were common ideas of the time in all the best heads from Voltaire downwards, yet Turgot had a patience which in them was universally wanting. There are two sorts of mistaken people in the world: those who always think that something could and ought to have been done to prevent disaster, and those who always think that nothing could have been done. Turgot was very far removed indeed from the latter class, but, on the other side, he was too sagacious not to know that there are some evils of which we do well to bear a part, as the best means of mitigating the other part. Though he respected the writings of Rousseau and confessed his obligations to them, Turgot abhorred declamation. He had no hope of clearing society of the intellectual and moral débris of ages at a stroke. Nor had he abstract standards of human bliss. The keyword to his political theory was not Pity nor Benevolence, but Justice. 'We are sure to go wrong,' he said once, when pressed to confer some advantage on the poor at the cost of the rich, 'the moment we forget that *justice alone can keep the balance true among all rights and all interests.*' Let us proceed to watch this principle actively applied in a field where it was grievously needed.

[Pg 119]

As everybody knows, the great fiscal grievance of old France was the *taille*, a tax raised on property and income, but only on the property and income of the unprivileged classes. In the Limousin Turgot's predecessor tried to substitute for the arbitrary *taille*, a tax systematically assessed in proportion to the amount of the person's property. Such a design involved a complete re-measurement and re-valuation of all the land of the Generality, and this was a task of immense magnitude and difficulty. It was very imperfectly performed, and Turgot found the province groaning under a mass of fiscal anomalies and disorders. Assessment, collection, exemption, were all alike conducted without definite principles or uniform system. Besides these abuses, the total sum demanded from the Generality by the royal government was greatly in excess of the local resources. The district was heavily overcharged, relatively to other districts around it. No deduction had been made from the sum exacted by the treasury, though the falling off in prosperity was great and notorious. Turgot computed that 'the king's share' was as large as that of the proprietors; in other words, taxation absorbed one half of the net products of the land. The government listened to these representations, and conceded to the Generality about half of the remissions that Turgot had solicited. A greater operation was the re-adjustment of the burden, thus lightened, within the province. The people were so irritated by the disorders which had been introduced by the imperfect operation of the proportional *taille*, that with the characteristic impatience of a rude and unintelligent population, they were heedlessly crying out for a return to the more familiar, and therefore more comfortable, disorders of the arbitrary *taille*. Turgot, as was natural, resisted this slovenly reaction, and applied himself with zealous industry to the immense and complex work of effecting a complete revision and settlement of the regulations for assessment, and, what was a more gigantic enterprise, of carrying out a new survey and new valuation of lands and property, to serve as a true base for the application of an equitable assessment. At the end of thirteen years of indomitable toil the work was still unfinished, chiefly owing to want of money for its execution. The court wasted more in a fortnight in the easy follies of Versailles, than would have given to the Limousin the instrument of a finished scheme of fiscal order. Turgot's labour was not wholly thrown away. The worst abuses were corrected, and the most crying iniquities swept away, save that iniquity of the exemption of the privileged orders, which Turgot could not yet venture to touch.

[Pg 120]

[Pg 121]

Let us proceed to another of the master abuses of the old system. The introduction of the *Corvée*, in the sense in which we have to speak of it, dates no further back than the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was an encroachment and an innovation on the part of the bureaucracy, and the odd circumstance has been remarked that the first mention of the road *corvées* in any royal Act is the famous edict of 1776, which suppressed them. Until the Regency this famous word had described only the services owed by dependents to their lords. It meant so many days' labour on the lord's lands, and so many offices of domestic duty. When, in the early part of the century, the advantages of a good system of high-roads began to be perceived by the government, the convenient idea came into the heads of the more ingenious among the Intendants of imposing, for the construction of the roads, a royal or public *corvée* analogous to that of private feudalism. Few more mischievous imposts could have been devised.

That undying class who are contented with the shallow presumptions of *à priori* reasoning in economic matters, did, it is true, find specious pleas even for the road *corvée*. There has never been an abuse in the history of the world, for which something good could not be said. If men earned money by labour and the use of their time, why not require from them time and labour instead of money? By the latter device, are we not assured against malversation of the funds? Those who substitute words for things, and verbal plausibilities for the observation of experience, could prolong these arguments indefinitely. The evils of the road *corvée*, meanwhile remained patent and indisputable. In England at the same period, it is true, the country people were obliged to give six days in the year to the repair of the highways, under the management of the justices of the peace. And in England the business was performed without oppression. But then this only illustrates the unwisdom of arguing about economic arrangements in the abstract. All depends on the conditions by which the given arrangement is surrounded, and a practice that in England was merely clumsy, was in France not only clumsy but a gross cruelty. There the burden united almost all the follies and iniquities with which a public service could be loaded. The French peasant had to give, not six, but twelve or fifteen days of labour every year for the construction and repair of the roads of his neighbourhood. If he had a horse and cart, they too were pressed into the service. He could not choose the time, and he was constantly carried away at the moment when his own poor harvest needed his right arm and his supervision. He received no pay, and his days on the roads were days of hunger to himself and his family. He had the bitterness of knowing that the advantage of the high-road was slight, indirect, and sometimes null to himself, while it was direct and great to the town merchants and the country gentlemen, who contributed not an hour nor a sou to the work. It was exactly the most indigent upon whose backs this slavish load was placed. There were a hundred abuses of spite or partiality, of favouritism or vengeance, in the allotment of the work. The wretch was sent to the part of the road most distant from his own house; or he was forced to work for a longer time than fell fairly to his share; or he saw a neighbour allowed to escape on payment of a sum of money. And at the end of all the roads were vile. The labourers, having little heart in work for which they had no wage, and weakened by want of food, did badly what they had to do. There was no scientific superintendence, no skilled direction, no system in the construction, no watchfulness as to the maintenance. The rains of winter and the storms of summer did damage that one man could have repaired by careful industry from day to day, and that for lack of this one man went on increasing, until the road fell into holes, the ditches got filled up, and deep pools of water stood permanently in the middle of the highway. The rich disdained to put a hand to the work; the poor,

[Pg 122]

[Pg 123]

aware that they would be forced to the hated task in the following autumn or spring, naturally attended to their own fields, and left the roads to fall to ruin.

It need not be said that this barbarous slovenliness and disorder meant an incredible waste of resources. It was calculated that a contractor would have provided and maintained fine roads for little more than one-third of the cost at which the *corvée* furnished roads that were execrable. Condorcet was right in comparing the government in this matter to a senseless fellow, who indulges in all the more lavish riot, because by paying for nothing, and getting everything at a higher price on credit, he is never frightened into sense by being confronted with a budget of his prodigalities.

[Pg 124]

It takes fewer words to describe Turgot's way of dealing with this oriental mixture of extravagance, injustice, and squalor. The Intendant of Caen had already proposed to the inhabitants of that district the alternative plan of commuting the *corvée* into a money payment. Turgot adopted and perfected this great transformation. He substituted for personal service on the roads a yearly rate, proportional in amount to the *taille*. He instituted a systematic survey and direction of the roads, existing or required in the Generality, and he committed the execution of the approved plans to contractors on exact and business-like principles. The result of this change was not merely an immense relief to the unfortunate men who had been every year harassed to death and half-ruined by the old method of forced labour, but so remarkable an improvement both in the goodness and extension of the roads, that when Arthur Young went over them five and twenty years afterwards, he pronounced them by far the noblest public ways to be found anywhere in France.

[Pg 125]

Two very instructive facts may be mentioned in connection with the suppression of the *corvées* in the Limousin. The first is that the central government assented to the changes proposed by the young Intendant, as promptly as if it had been a committee of the Convention, instead of being the nominee of an absolute king. The other is that the people in the country, when Turgot had his plans laid before them in their parish meetings held after mass on Sundays, listened with the keenest distrust and suspicion to what they insisted on regarding as a sinister design for exacting more money from them. Well might Condorcet say that very often it needs little courage to do men harm, for they constantly suffer harm tranquilly enough; but when you take it into your head to do them some service, then they revolt and accuse you of being an innovator. It is fair, however, to remember how many good grounds the French countryman had for distrusting the professions of any agent of the government. For even in the case of this very reform, though Turgot was able to make an addition to the *taille* in commutation of the work on the roads, he was not able to force a contribution, either to the *taille* or any other impost, from the privileged classes, the very persons who were best able to pay. This is only an illustration of what is now a well-known fact, that revolution was made necessary less by despotism than by privilege on the one side, and by intense political distrust on the other side.

[Pg 126]

Turgot was thoroughly awake to the necessity of penetrating public opinion. The first principle of the school of Economists was an 'enlightened people.' Nothing was to be done by them; everything was to be done for them. But they were to be trained to understand the grounds of the measures which a central authority conceived, shaped, and carried into practice. Rousseau was the only writer of the revolutionary school who had the modern democratic faith in the virtue and wisdom of the common people. Voltaire habitually spoke of their bigotry and prejudice with the natural bitterness of a cultivated man towards the incurable vices of ignorance. The Economists admitted Voltaire's view as true of an existing state of things, but they looked to education, meaning by that something more than primary instruction, to lead gradually to the development of sound political intelligence. Hence when Turgot came into full power as the minister of Lewis XVI., twelve years after he first went to his obscure duties in the Limousin, he introduced the method of prefacing his edicts by an elaborate statement of the reasons on which their policy rested. And on the same principle he now adopted the only means at his disposal for instructing and directing opinion. The book-press was at that moment doing tremendous work among the classes with education and leisure. But the newspaper press hardly existed, and even if it had existed, however many official journals Turgot might have had under his inspiration, the people whose minds he wished to affect were unable to read. There was only one way of reaching them, and that was through the priests. Religious life among the Limousins was, as we have seen, not very pure, but it is a significant law of human nature that the less pure a religion is, the more important in it is the place of the priest and his office. Turgot pressed the curés into friendly service. It is a remarkable fact, not without a parallel in other parts of modern history, that of the two great conservative corporations of society, the lawyers did all they could to thwart his projects, and the priests did all they could to advance them. In truth the priests are usually more or less sympathetic towards any form of centralised authority; it is only when the people take their own government into their own hands that the clergy are sure to turn cold or antipathetic towards improvement. There is one other reservation, as Turgot found out in 1775, when he had been transferred to a greater post, and the clergy had joined his bitterest enemies. Then he touched the corporate spirit, and perceived that for authority to lay a hand on ecclesiastical privilege is to metamorphose goodwill into the most rancorous malignity. Meanwhile, the letters in which Turgot explained his views and wishes to the curés, by them to be imparted to their parishes, are masterpieces of the care, the patience, the interest, of a good ruler. Those impetuous and peremptory spirits who see in Frederick or Napoleon the only born rulers of men, might find in these letters, and in the acts to which they refer, the memorials of a far more admirable and beneficent type.

[Pg 127]

[Pg 128]

The *corvée*, vexatious as it was, yet excited less violent heats and inflicted less misery than the abuses of military service. There had been a militia in the country as far back as the time of the Merovingians, but the militia-service with which Turgot had to deal only dated from 1726. Each parish was bound to supply its quota of men to this service, and the obligation was perhaps the most odious grievance, though not the most really mischievous, of all that then afflicted the realm. The hatred which it raised was due to no failure of the military spirit in the people. From Frederick the Great downwards, everybody was well aware that the disasters to France which had begun with the shameful defeat of Rossbach and ended with the loss of Canada in the west and the Indies in the east (1757-1763), were due to no want of valour in the common soldier. It was the generals, as Napoleon said fifty years afterwards, who were incapable and inept. And it was the ineptitude of the administrative chiefs that made the militia at once ineffective and abhorred. First, they allowed a great number of classified exemptions from the ballot. The noble, the tonsured clerk, the counsellor, the domestic of noble, tonsured clerk, and counsellor, the eldest son of the lawyer and the farmer, the tax collector, the schoolmaster, were all exempt. Hence the curse of service was embittered by a sense of injustice. This was one of the many springs in the old régime that fed the swelling and vehement stream of passion for social equality, until at length when the day came, it made such short and furious work with the structure of envious partition between citizen and citizen.

[Pg 129]

Again, by a curious perversity of official pedantry, the government insisted on each man who drew the black ticket in the abhorred lottery, performing his service in person. It forbade substitution. Under a modern system of universal military service, this is perfectly intelligible and just. But, as we have seen, military service was only made obligatory on those who were already ground down by hardships. As a consequence of this prohibition, those who were liable to be drawn lived in despair, and as no worse thing than the black ticket could possibly befall them, they had every inducement to run away from their own homes and villages. At the approach of the commissary of the government, they fled into the woods and marshes, as if they had been pursued by the plague. This was a signal for a civil war on a small scale. Those who were left behind, and whose chance of being drawn was thus increased, hastened to pursue the fugitives with such weapons as came to their hands. In the Limousin the country was constantly the scene of murderous disorders of this kind. What was worse, was not only that the land was infested by vagabonds and bad characters, but that villages became half depopulated, and the soil lost its cultivators. Finally, as is uniformly the case in the history of bad government, an unjust method produced a worthless machine. The *milice* supplied as bad troops as the *corvée* supplied bad roads. The force was recruited from the lowest class of the population, and as soon as its members had learned a little drill, they were discharged and their places taken by raw batches provided at random by blind lot.

[Pg 130]

Turgot proposed that a character both of permanence and locality should be given to the provincial force; that each parish or union of parishes should be required to raise a number of men; that these men should be left at home and in their own districts, and only called out for exercise for a certain time each year; and that they should be retained as a reserve force by a small payment. In this way, he argued that the government would secure a competent force, and by stimulating local pride and point of honour would make service popular instead of hateful. As the government was too weak and distracted to take up so important a scheme as this, Turgot was obliged to content himself with evading the existing regulations; and it is a curious illustration of the pliancy of Versailles, that he should have been allowed to do so openly and without official remonstrance. He permitted the victim of the ballot to provide a voluntary substitute, and he permitted the parish to tempt substitutes by payment of a sum of money on enrolment. This may seem a very obvious course to follow; but no one who has tried to realise the strength and obstinacy of routine, will measure the service of a reformer by the originality of his ideas. In affairs of government, the priceless qualities are not merely originality of resource, but a sense for things that are going wrong, and a sufficiently vigorous will to set them right.

[Pg 131]

One general expression serves to describe this most important group of Turgot's undertakings. The reader has probably already observed that what Turgot was doing, was to take that step which is one of the most decisive in the advance of a society to a highly organised industrial stage. He displaced imposts in kind, that rudest and most wasteful form of contribution to the public service, and established in their stead a system of money payments, and of having the work of the government done on commercial principles. Thus, as if it were not enough to tear the peasant away from the soil to serve in the militia, as if it were not enough to drag away the farmer and his cattle to the public highways, the reigning system struck a third blow at agriculture by requiring the people of the localities that happened to be traversed by a regiment on the march, to supply their waggons and horses and oxen for the purposes of military transport. In this case, it is true, a certain compensation in money was allowed, but how inadequate was this insignificant allowance, we may easily understand. The payment was only for one day, but the day's march was often of many miles, and the oxen, which in the Limousin mostly did the work of horses, were constantly seen to drop down dead in the roads. There was not only the one day's work. Often two, three, or five days were needed to reach the place of appointment, and for these days not even the paltry twenty sous were granted. Nor could any payment of this kind recompense the peasant for the absence of his beasts of burden on the great days when he wanted to plough his fields, to carry the grain to the barns, or to take his produce to market. The obvious remedy here, as in the *corvées* was to have the transport effected by a contractor, and to pay him out of a rate levied on the persons liable. This was what Turgot

[Pg 132]

ordered to be done.

Of one other burden of the same species he relieved the cultivator. This unfortunate being was liable to be called upon to collect, as well as to pay, the taxes. Once nominated, he became responsible for the amount at which his commune was assessed. If he did not produce the sum, he lost his liberty. If he advanced it from his own pocket, he lost at least the interest on the money. In collecting the money from his fellow taxpayers, he not only incurred bitter and incessant animosities, but, what was harder to bear, he lost the priceless time of which his own land was only too sorely in need. In the Limousin the luckless creature had a special disadvantage, for here the collector of the *taille* had also to collect the twentieths, and the twentieths were a tax for which even the privileged classes were liable. They, as might be supposed, cavilled, disputed, and appealed. The appeal lay to a sort of county board, which was composed of people of their own kind, and before which they too easily made out a plausible case against a clumsy collector, who more often than not knew neither how to read nor to write. Turgot's reform of a system which was always harassing and often ruinous to an innocent individual, consisted in the creation of the task of collection into a distinct and permanent office, exercised over districts sufficiently large to make the poundage, out of which the collectors were paid, an inducement to persons of intelligence and spirit to undertake the office as a profession. However moderate and easy each of these reforms may seem by itself, yet any one may see how the sum of them added to the prosperity of the land, increased the efficiency of the public service, and tended to lessen the grinding sense of injustice among the common people.

[Pg 133]

Apart from these, the greatest and most difficult of all Turgot's administrative reforms, we may notice in passing his assiduity in watching for the smaller opportunities of making life easier to the people of his province. His private benevolence was incessant and marked. One case of its exercise carries our minds at a word into the very midst of the storm of fire which purified France of the evil and sordid elements, that now and for his life lay like a mountain of lead on all Turgot's aims and efforts. A certain foreign contractor at Limoges was ruined by the famine of 1770. He had a clever son, whom Turgot charitably sent to school, and afterwards to college in Paris. The youth grew up to be the most eloquent and dazzling of the Girondins, the high-souled Vergniaud. It was not, however, in good works of merely private destination that Turgot mostly exercised himself. In 1767 the district was infested by wolves. The Intendant imposed a small tax for the purpose of providing rewards for the destruction of these tormentors, and in reading the minutes on the subject we are reminded of the fact, which was not without its significance when the peasants rose in vengeance on their lords two and twenty years later, that the dispersion of the hamlets and the solitude of the farms had made it customary for the people to go about with fire-arms. Besides encouraging the destruction of noxious beasts, Turgot did something for the preservation of beasts not noxious. The first veterinary school in France had been founded at Lyons in 1762. To this he sent pupils from his province, and eventually he founded a similar school at Limoges. He suppressed a tax on cattle, which acted prejudicially on breeding and grazing; and he introduced clover into the grass-lands. The potato had been unknown in Limousin. It was not common in any part of France; and perhaps this is not astonishing when we remember that the first field crop even in agricultural Scotland is supposed only to have been sown in the fourth decade of that century. People would not touch it, though the experiment of persuading them to cultivate this root had been frequently tried. In the Limousin the people were even more obstinate in their prejudice than elsewhere. But Turgot persevered, knowing how useful potatoes would be in a land where scarcity of grain was so common. The ordinary view was that they were hardly fit for pigs, and that in human beings they would certainly breed leprosy. Some of the English Puritans would not eat potatoes because they are not mentioned in the Bible, and that is perhaps no better a reason than the other. When, however, it was seen that the Intendant had the hated vegetable served every day at his own table, the opposition grew more faint; men were at last brought to consent to use potatoes for their cattle, and after a time even for themselves.

[Pg 134]

[Pg 135]

It need scarcely be said that among Turgot's efforts for agricultural improvement, was the foundation of an agricultural society. This was the time when the passion for provincial academies of all sorts was at its height. When we consider that Turgot's society was not practical but deliberative, and what themes he proposed for discussion by it, we may believe that it was one of the less useful of his works. What the farmers needed was something much more directly instructive in the methods of their business, than could come of discussions as to the effects of indirect taxation on the revenues of landowners, or the right manner of valuing the income of land in the different kinds of cultivation. 'In that most unlucky path of French exertion,' says Arthur Young, 'this distinguished patriot was able to do nothing. This society does like other societies; they meet, converse, offer premiums, and publish nonsense. This is not of much consequence, for the people instead of reading their memoirs are not able to read at all. They can, however, *see*, and if a farm was established in that good cultivation which they ought to copy, something would be presented from which they *might* learn. I asked particularly if the members of this society had land in their own hands, and was assured that they had; but the conversation presently explained it. They had *métayers* round their country seats, and this was considered as farming their own lands, so that they assume something of a merit from the identical circumstance, which is the curse and ruin of the whole country.'

[Pg 136]

The record of what Turgot did for manufacturing industry and commerce is naturally shorter than that of his efforts for the relief of the land and its cultivators. In the eyes of the modern economist, with his horror of government encouragement to industry, no matter in what time, place, or circumstance, some of Turgot's actions will seem of doubtful wisdom. At Brives, for



example, with all the authority of an Intendant, he urged the citizens to provide buildings for carrying on a certain manufacture which he and others thought would be profitable to the town; and, as the money for the buildings did not come in very readily, he levied a rate both on the town and on the inhabitants of the suburbs. His argument was that the new works would prove indirectly beneficial to the whole neighbourhood. He was not long, however, in finding out, as the authors of such a policy generally find out, how difficult it is to reconcile the interests of aided manufactures with those of the taxpayers. It is characteristic, we may remark, of the want of public spirit in the great nobles, that one of Turgot's first difficulties in the affair was to defeat an unjust claim made by no less a personage than the Marshal de Noailles, to a piece of public land on which the proposed works were to be built. A more important industry in the history of Limoges sprang from the discovery, during Turgot's tenure of office, of the china clay which has now made the porcelain of Limoges only second among the French potteries to that of Sèvres itself. The modern pottery has been developed since the close of the Revolution, which checked the establishments and processes that had been directed, encouraged, and supervised by Turgot.

[Pg 137]

To his superior enlightenment in another part of the commercial field we owe one of the most excellent of Turgot's pieces, his Memorial on Loans of Money. This plea for free trade in money has all the sense and liberality of the brightest side of the eighteenth century illumination. It was suggested by the following circumstance. At Angoulême four or five rogues associated together, and drew bills on one another. On these bills they borrowed money, the average rate of interest being from eight to ten per cent. When the bills fell due, instead of paying them, they laid informations against the lenders for taking more than the legal rate of interest. The lenders were ruined, persons who had money were afraid to make advances, bills were protested, commercial credit was broken, and the trade of the district was paralysed. Turgot prevailed upon the Council of State to withdraw the cases from the local jurisdiction; the proceedings against the lenders were annulled, and the institution of similar proceedings forbidden. This was a characteristic course. The royal government was generally willing in the latter half of the eighteenth century to redress a given case of abuse, but it never felt itself strong enough, or had leisure enough, to deal with the general source from which the particular grievance sprang. Turgot's Memorial is as cogent an exposure of the mischief of Usury Laws to the public prosperity, as the more renowned pages either of Bentham or J. B. Say on the same subject, and it has the merit of containing an explanation at once singularly patient and singularly intelligent, of the origin of the popular feeling about usury and its adoption by the legislator.

[Pg 138]

After he had been eight years at his post, Turgot was called upon to deal with the harassing problems of a scarcity of food. In 1770 even the maize and black grain, and the chestnuts on which the people supported life, failed almost completely, and the failure extended over two years. The scarcity very speedily threatened to become a famine, and all its conditions were exasperated by the unwisdom of the authorities, and the selfish rapacity of the landlords. It needed all the firmness and all the circumspection of which Turgot was capable, to overcome the difficulties which the strong forces of ignorance, prejudice, and greediness raised up against him.

[Pg 139]

His first battle was on an issue which is painfully familiar to our own Indian administrators at the present time. In 1764, an edict had been promulgated decreeing free trade in grain, not with foreign countries, but among the different provinces of the kingdom. This edict had not made much way in the minds either of the local officials or of the people at large, and the presence of famine made the free and unregulated export of food seem no better than a cruel and outrageous paradox. The parlement of Bordeaux at once suspended the edict of 1764. They ordered that all dealers in grain, farmers of land, owners of land, of whatever rank, quality, or condition, should forthwith convey to the markets of their district '*a sufficient quantity*' of grain to provision the said markets. The same persons were forbidden to sell either by wholesale or retail any portion of the said grain at their own granaries. Turgot at once procured from the Council at Versailles the proper instrument for checking this impolitic interference with the free circulation of grain, and he contrived this instrument in such conciliatory terms as to avoid any breach with the parlement, whose motives, for that matter, were respectable enough. In spite, however, of the action of the government, popular feeling ran high against free markets. Tumultuous gatherings of famishing men and women menaced the unfortunate grain-dealers. Waggoners engaged in carrying grain away from a place where it was cheaper, to another place where it was dearer, were violently arrested in their business, and terrified from proceeding. Hunger prevented people from discerning the unanswerable force of the argument that if the grain commanded a higher price somewhere else, that was a sure sign of the need there being more dire. The local officials were as hostile as their humbler neighbours. At the town of Turenne, they forbade grain to be taken away, and forced the owners of it to sell it on the spot at the market rate. At the town of Angoulême the lieutenant of police took upon himself to order that all the grain destined for the Limousin should be unloaded and stored at Angoulême. Turgot brought a heavy hand to bear on these breakers of administrative discipline, and readily procured such sanction as his authority needed from the Council.

[Pg 140]

One of the most interesting of the measures to which Turgot resorted in meeting the destitution of the country, was the establishment of the Charitable Workshops. Some of the advocates of the famous National Workshops of 1848 have appealed to this example of the severe patriot, for a sanction to their own economic policy. It is not clear that the logic of the Socialist is here more remorseless than usual. If the State may set up workshops to aid people who are short of food because the harvest has failed, why should it not do the same when people are short of food because trade is bad, work scarce, and wages intolerably low? Of course Turgot's answer would have been that remorseless logic is the most improper instrument in the world for a business of

[Pg 141]

rough expedients, such as government is. There is a vital difference in practice between opening a public workshop in the exceptional emergency of a famine, and keeping public workshops open as a normal interference with the free course of industrial activity. For the moment the principle may appear to be the same, but in reality the application of the principle means in the latter case the total disorganisation of industry; in the former it means no more than a temporary breach of the existing principles of organisation, with a view to its speedier revival. To invoke Turgot as a dabbler in Socialism because he opened *ateliers de charité*, is as unreasonable as it would be to make an English minister who should suspend the Bank Charter Act in a crisis, into the champion of an inconvertible paper currency. Turgot always regarded the sums paid in his works, not as wages, but as alms. All that he urged was that 'the best and most useful kind of alms consists in providing means for earning them.' To prevent the workers from earning aid with as little trouble to themselves as possible, he recommended payment by the piece and not by the day. To check workers from flocking in from their regular employments, he insisted on the wages being kept below the ordinary rate, and he urged the propriety of driving as sharp bargains as possible in fixing the price of the piece of work. To prevent the dissipation of earnings at the tavern, he paid not in money, but in leathern tokens, that were only current in exchange for provisions. All these regulations mark a wide gulf between the Economist of 1770 and the Socialist of 1848. Nobody was sterner than Turgot against beggars, the inevitable scourge of every country where the evils of vicious economic arrangements are aggravated by the mischievous views of the Catholic clergy, first, as to the duties of promiscuous almsgiving, and second, as to the virtue of improvident marriages. In 1614 the States General had been for hanging all mendicants, and Colbert had sent them to the galleys. Turgot was less rigorous than that, but he would not suffer his efforts for the economic restoration of his province to be thwarted by the influx of these devouring parasites, and he sent every beggar on whom hands could be laid to prison.

[Pg 142]

The story of the famine in the Limousin brings to light some instructive facts as to the temper of the lords and rich proprietors on the eve of the changes that were to destroy them. Turgot had been specially anxious that as much as possible of what was necessary for the relief of distress should be done by private persons. He knew the straits of the government. He knew how hard it would be to extract from it the means of repairing a deficit in his own finances. Accordingly he invited the landowners, not merely to contribute sums of money in return for the public works carried on in their neighbourhood, but also, by way of providing employment to their indigent neighbours, to undertake such works as they should find convenient on their own estates. The response was disappointing. 'The districts,' he wrote in 1772, 'where I have works on foot, do not give me reason to hope for much help on the side of the generosity of the nobles and the rich landowners. The Prince de Soubise is so far the only person who has given anything for the works that have been executed in his duchy.' Nor was abstinence from generosity the worst part of this failure in public spirit. The same nobles and landowners who refused to give, did not refuse to take away. Most of them proceeded at once to dismiss their *métayers*, the people who farmed their lands in consideration of a fixed proportion of the produce. Turgot, in an ordinance of admirable gravity, remonstrated against this harsh and impolitic proceeding. He pointed out that the unfortunate wretches, thus stripped of every resource, would have to leave the district, abandoning their wives and children to the charity of villages that were already overburdened with the charge of their own people. To cast this additional load on the villages was all the more unjust, because the owners of land had been exempted from one-half of the taxes levied on the owners of other property, exactly because the former were expected to provide for their own peasants. It was a claim less of humanity than of bare justice, that the landowners should do something for men with whom their relations had been so close as to be almost domestic, and to whose hard toil their masters owed all that they possessed. As a mere matter of self-interest, moreover, apart alike from both justice and humanity, the death or flight of the labourers would leave the proprietors helpless when the next good season came, and for want of hands the land would be doomed to barrenness for years to come, to the grievous detriment no less of the landowners than of the whole people of the realm. Accordingly, Turgot ordered all those who had dismissed their *métayers* to take them back again, and he enacted generally that all proprietors, of whatever quality or condition, and whether privileged or not, should be bound to keep and support until the next harvest all the labourers who had been on their land in the previous October, as well women and children as men.

[Pg 143]

[Pg 144]

Turgot's policy in this matter is more instructive as to the social state of France, than it may at first sight appear. At first sight we are astonished to find the austere economist travelling so far from the orthodox path of free contract as to order a landowner to furnish at his own cost subsistence for his impoverished tenants. But the truth is that the *métayer* was not a free tenant in the sense which we attach to the word. 'In Limousin,' says Arthur Young, '*the métayers are considered as little better than menial servants.*' And it is not going beyond the evidence to say that they were even something lower than menial servants; they were really a kind of serf-caste. They lived in the lowest misery. More than half of them were computed to be deeply in debt to the proprietors. In many cases they were even reduced every year to borrow from their landlord, before the harvest came round, such coarse bread of mixed rye and barley as he might choose to lend them. What Turgot therefore had in his mind was no relation of free contract, though it was that legally, but a relation which partly resembled that of a feudal lord to his retainer, and partly—as Sir Henry Maine has hinted—that of a planter to his negroes. It is less surprising, then, that Turgot should have enforced some of the responsibilities of the lord and the planter.

[Pg 145]

The nobles had resort to a still more indefensible measure than the expulsion of their *métayers*. Most of the lands in the Generality of Limoges were charged with dues in kind payable to the lords. As the cultivators had for the most part no grain even for their own bread, they naturally

had no grain for the lord's dues. The lords then insisted on payment in cash, and they insisted on estimating this payment at the famine price of the grain. Most of them were really as needy as they were idle and proud, and nothing is so inordinately grasping as the indigence of class-pride. The effect of their proceedings now was to increase their revenue fourfold and fivefold out of public calamity and universal misery. And unfortunately the liability of the cultivators in a given manor was *solidaire*; they were jointly and severally responsible, and the effect of this was that even those who were in circumstances to pay the quadrupled dues, were ruined and destroyed without mercy in consequence of having also to pay the quadrupled dues of their beggared neighbours. Turgot arrested this odious process by means of an old and forgotten decree, which he prevailed upon the parlement of Bordeaux to revive in good and due form, to the effect that the arrears of dues in kind for 1769 should be paid at the market price of grain when the dues were payable; that is, before the scarcity had declared itself.

[Pg 146]

When we consider the grinding and extortionate spirit thus shown in face of a common calamity, we may cease to wonder at the ferocity with which, when the hour struck, the people tore away privilege, distinction, and property itself from classes that had used all three only to ruin the land and crush its inhabitants into the dust. And the moment that the lord had thus transformed himself into a mere creditor, and a creditor for goods delivered centuries ago, and long since consumed and forgotten, then it was certain that, if political circumstances favoured the growing economic sentiment, there would be heard again the old cry of the Roman plebs for an agrarian law and *novæ tabulæ*. Nay, something was heard that is amazingly like the cry of the modern Irish peasant. In 1776 two noteworthy incidents happened. A certain Marquis de Vibraye threw into prison a peasant who refused to pay the *droit de cens*. Immediately between thirty and forty peasants came to the rescue, armed themselves, besieged the château, took it and sacked it, and drove the Marquis de Vibraye away in terror. Still more significant is the second incident, which happened shortly after. A relative of the Duke of Mortemart, shooting on his property, was attacked by peasants who insisted that he should cease his sport. They treated him with much brutality, and even threatened to fire on him and his attendants, '*claiming to be free masters of their lands*.' Here was the main root of the great French Revolution. A fair consideration of the details of such an undertaking as Turgot's administration of the Limousin helps us to understand two things: first, that all the ideas necessary for the pacific transformation of French society were there in the midst of it; second, that the system of privilege had fostered such a spirit in one class, and the reaction against the inconsiderate manifestation of that spirit was so violent in the other class, that good political ideas were vain and inapplicable.

[Pg 147]

It is curious to find that, in the midst of his beneficent administration, Turgot was rating practical work very low in comparison with the achievements of the student and the thinker. 'You are very fortunate,' Condorcet said to him, 'in having a passion for the public good, and in being able to satisfy it; it is a great consolation, and of a very superior order to the consolation of mere study.' 'Nay,' replied Turgot, in his next letter, 'whatever you may say, I believe that the satisfaction derived from study is superior to any other kind of satisfaction. I am perfectly convinced that one may be, through study, a thousand times more useful to men than in any of our subordinate posts. There we torment ourselves, and often without any compensating success, to secure some small benefits, while we are the involuntary instrument of evils that are by no means small. All our small benefits are transitory, while the light that a man of letters is able to diffuse must, sooner or later, destroy all the artificial evils of the human race, and place it in a position to enjoy all the goods that nature offers.' It is clear that we can only accept Turgot's preference, on condition that the man of letters is engaged on work that seriously advances social interests and adds something to human stature. Most literature, nearly all literature, is distinctly subordinate and secondary; it only serves to pass the time of the learned or cultured class, without making any definite mark either on the mental habits of men and women, or on the institutions under which they live. Compared with such literature as this, the work of an administrator who makes life materially easier and more hopeful to the half-million of persons living in the Generality of Limoges or elsewhere, must be pronounced emphatically the worthier and more justly satisfactory.<sup>[44]</sup>

[Pg 148]

Turgot himself, however, found time, in his industry at Limoges, to make a contribution to a kind of literature which has seriously modified the practical arrangements and social relations of the western world. In 1766 he published his *Essay on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth*—a short but most pithy treatise, in which he anticipated some of the leading economic principles of that greater work by Adam Smith, which was given to the world ten years later. Turgot's *Essay* has none of the breadth of historic outlook, and none of the amplitude of concrete illustrations from real affairs, which make the *Wealth of Nations* so deeply fertile, so persuasive, so interesting, so thoroughly alive, so genuinely enriching to the understanding of the judicious reader. But the comparative dryness of Turgot's too concise form does not blind the historian of political economy to the merit of the substance of his propositions. It was no small proof of originality and enlightenment to precede Adam Smith by ten years in the doctrines of free trade, of free industry, of loans on interest, of the constitutive elements of price, of the effects of the division of labour, of the processes of the formation of capital. The passage on interest will bear reproducing once more:—'We may regard the rate of interest as a kind of level, below which all labour, all cultivation, all industry, all commerce ceases. It is like a sea spreading out over a vast district; the tops of the mountains rise above the waters and form fertile and cultivated islands. If the sea by any chance finds an outlet, then in proportion as it goes down, first the slopes, next the plains and valleys, appear and clothe themselves with productions of every kind. It is enough that the sea rises or falls by a foot, to inundate vast shores, or to restore them to cultivation and plenty.' There are not many illustrations at once so apt and so picturesque as this, but most of the

[Pg 149]

[Pg 150]

hundred paragraphs that make up the Reflections are, notwithstanding one or two of the characteristic crotchets of Quesnai's school, both accurate and luminous.

## V.

In May 1774 Lewis XV. died. His successor was only twenty years old; he was sluggish in mind, vacillating in temper, and inexperienced in affairs. Maurepas was recalled, to become the new king's chief adviser; and Maurepas, at the suggestion of one of Turgot's college friends, summoned the Intendant from Limoges, and placed him at the head of the department of marine. This post Turgot only held for a couple of months; he was then preferred to the great office of Controller-General. The condition of the national finance made its administration the most important of all the departments of the government. Turgot's policy in this high sphere belongs to the general history of France, and there is no occasion for us to reproduce its details here. It was mainly an attempt to extend over the whole realm the kind of reforms which had been tried on a small scale in the Limousin. He suppressed the *corvées*, and he tacked the money payment which was substituted for that burden on to the Twentieths, an impost from which the privileged class was not exempt. 'The weight of this charge,' he made the king say in the edict of suppression, 'now falls and must fall only on the poorest classes of our subjects.' This truth only added to the exasperation of the rich, and perhaps might well have been omitted. Along with the *corvées* were suppressed the jurandes, or exclusive industrial corporations or trade-guilds, whose monopolies and restrictions were so mischievous an impediment to the wellbeing of the country. In the preamble to this edict we seem to be breathing the air, not of Versailles in 1775, but of the Convention in 1793:—'God, when he made man with wants, and rendered labour an indispensable resource, made the right of work the property of every individual in the world, and this property is the first, the most sacred, and the most imprescriptible of all kinds of property. We regard it as one of the first duties of our justice, and as one of the acts most of all worthy of our benevolence, to free our subjects from every infraction of that inalienable right of humanity.'

[Pg 151]

Again, Turgot removed a tax from certain forms of lease, with a view to promote the substitution of a system of farming for the system of *métayers*. He abolished an obstructive privilege by which the Hôtel Dieu had the exclusive right of selling meat during Lent. The whole of the old incoherent and vexatious police of the corn-markets was swept away. Finally, he inspired the publication of a short but most important writing, Boncerf's *Inconvénients des Droits Féodaux*, in which, without criticising the origin of the privileges of the nobles, the author showed how much it would be to the advantage of the lords to accept a commutation of their feudal dues. What was still more exasperating both to nobles and lawyers, was the author's hardy assertion that if the lords refused the offer of their vassals, the king had the power to settle the question for them by his own legislative authority. This was the most important and decisive of the pre-revolutionary tracts.

[Pg 152]

Equally violent prejudices and more sensitive interests were touched by two other sets of proposals. The minister began to talk of a new territorial contribution, and a great survey and re-assessment of the land. Then followed an edict restoring in good earnest the free circulation of corn within the kingdom. Turgot was a partisan of free trade in its most entire application; but for the moment he contented himself with the free importation of grain and its free circulation at home, without sanctioning its exportation abroad. Apart from changes thus organically affecting the industry of the country, Turgot dealt sternly with certain corruptions that had crept into the system of tax-farming, as well as with the monstrous abuses of the system of court-pensions.

The measures we have enumerated were all excellent in themselves, and the state of the kingdom was such as urgently to call for them. They were steps towards the construction of a fabric of freedom and justice. But they provoked a host of bitter and irreconcilable enemies, while they raised up no corresponding host of energetic supporters. The reason of the first of these circumstances is plain enough, but the second demands a moment's consideration. That the country clergy should denounce the Philosopher, as they called him, from the pulpit and the steps of the altar, was natural enough. Many even of his old colleagues of the Encyclopædia had joined Necker against the minister. The greatest of them all, it is true, stood by Turgot with unflinching staunchness; a shower of odes, diatribes, dialogues, allegories, dissertations, came from the Patriarch of Ferney to confound and scatter the enemies of the new reforms. But the people were unmoved. If Turgot published an explanation of the high price of grain, they perversely took explanation for gratulation, and thought the Controller preferred to have bread dear. If he put down seditious risings with a strong hand, they insisted that he was in nefarious league with the corn-merchants and the bakers. How was it that the people did not recognise the hand of a benefactor? The answer is that they suspected the source of the new reforms too virulently to judge them calmly. For half a century, as Condorcet says pregnantly, they had been undergoing the evils of anarchy, while they supposed that they were feeling those of despotism. The error was grave, but it was natural, and one effect of it was to make every measure that proceeded from the court odious. Hence, when the parlements took up their judicial arms in defence of abuses and against reforms, the common people took sides with them, for no better reason than that this was to take sides against the king's government. Malesherbes in those days, and good writers since, held that the only safe plan was to convoke the States-General. They would at least have shared the responsibility with the crown. Turgot rejected this opinion. By doctrine, no less than by temperament, he disliked the control of a government by popular bodies. Everything for

[Pg 153]

[Pg 154]

the people, nothing by the people: this was the maxim of the Economists, and Turgot held it in all its rigour. The royal authority was the only instrument that he could bring himself to use. Even if he could have counted on a Frederick or a Napoleon, the instrument would hardly have served his purposes; as things were, it was a broken reed, not a fine sword, that he had to his hand.

The National Assembly and the Convention went to work exactly in the same stiff and absolute spirit as Turgot. They were just as little disposed to gradual, moderate, and compromising ways as he. But with them the absolute authority on which they leaned was real and most potent; with him it was a shadow. We owe it to Turgot that the experiment was complete: he proved that the monarchy of divine right was incapable of reform.<sup>[45]</sup> As it has been sententiously expressed, 'The part of the sages was now played out; room was now for the men of destiny.'

[Pg 155]

If the repudiation of a popular assembly was the cardinal error in Turgot's scheme of policy, there were other errors added. The publication of Boncerf's attack on the feudal dues, with the undisguised sanction of the minister, has been justly condemned as a grave imprudence, and as involving a forgetfulness of the true principles of government and administration, that would certainly not have been committed either by Colbert, in whom Turgot professed to seek his model, nor by Gournai, who had been his master. It was a broad promise of reforms which Turgot was by no means sure of being able to persuade the king and his council to adopt. By prematurely divulging his projects, it augmented the number of his adversaries, without being definite enough to bring new friends.<sup>[46]</sup> Again, Turgot did nothing to redeem it by personal conciliatoriness in carrying out the designs of a benevolent absolutism. The Count of Provence, afterwards Lewis XVIII., wrote a satire on the government during Turgot's ministry, and in it there is a picture of the great reformer as he appeared to his enemies: 'There was then in France an awkward, heavy, clumsy creature; born with more rudeness than character, more obstinacy than firmness, more impetuosity than tact; a charlatan in administration no less than in virtue, exactly formed to get the one decried and to disgust the world with the other; made harsh and distant by his self-love, and timid by his pride; as much a stranger to men, whom he had never known, as to the public weal, which he had never seen aright; this man was called Turgot.'

[Pg 156]

It is a mistake to take the word of political adversaries for a man's character, but adversaries sometimes only say out aloud what is already suspected by friends. The coarse account given by the Count of Provence shows us where Turgot's weakness as a ruler may have lain. He was distant and stiff in manner, and encouraged no one to approach him. Even his health went against him, for at a critical time in his short ministry he was confined to bed by gout for four months, and he could see nobody save clerks and secretaries. The very austerity, loftiness, and purity, which make him so reverend and inspiring a figure in the pages of the noble-hearted Condorcet, may well have been impediments in dealing with a society that, in the fatal words of the Roman historian, could bear neither its disorders nor their remedies.

The king had once said pathetically: 'It is only M. Turgot and I who love the people.' But even with the king, there were points at which the minister's philosophic severity strained their concord. Turgot was the friend of Voltaire and Condorcet; he counted Christianity a form of superstition; and he, who as a youth had refused to go through life wearing the mask of the infidel abbé, had too much self-respect in his manhood to practise the rites and uses of a system which he considered a degradation of the understanding. One day the king said to Maurepas: 'You have given me a Controller-general who never goes to mass.' 'Sire,' replied that ready worldling, 'the Abbé Terray always went'—and Terray had brought the government to bankruptcy. But Turgot hurt the king's conscience more directly than by staying away from mass and confession. Faithful to the long tradition of his ancestors, Lewis XVI. wished the ceremony of his coronation to take place at Rheims. Turgot urged that it should be performed at Paris, and as cheaply as possible. And he advanced on to still more delicate ground. In the rite of consecration, the usage was that the king should take an oath to pursue all heretics. Turgot demanded the suppression of this declaration of intolerance. It was pointed out to him that it was only a formality. But Turgot was one of those severe and scrupulous souls, to whom a wicked promise does not cease to be degrading by becoming hypocritical. And he was perfectly justified. It was only by the gradual extinction of the vestiges of her ancient barbarisms, as occasion offered, that the Church could have escaped the crash of the Revolution. Meanwhile, the king and the priests had their own way: the king was crowned at Rheims, and the priests exacted from him an oath to be unjust, oppressive, and cruel towards a portion of his subjects. Turgot could only remonstrate; but the philosophic memorial in which he protested in favour of religious freedom and equality, gave the king a serious shock.

[Pg 157]

We have no space, nor would it be worth while, to describe the intrigues which ended in the minister's fall. Already in the previous volume, we have referred to the immediate and decisive share which, the queen had in his disgrace.<sup>[47]</sup> He was dismissed in the beginning of May 1776, having been in power little more than twenty months. 'You are too hurried,' Malessherbes had said to him. 'You think you have the love of the public good; not at all; you have a rage for it, for a man must be nothing short of enraged to insist on forcing the hand of the whole world.' Turgot replied, more pathetically perhaps than reasonably, 'What, you accuse me of haste, and you know that in my family we die of gout at fifty!'

[Pg 158]

There is something almost tragic in the joy with which Turgot's dismissal was received on all sides. 'I seem,' said Marmontel, 'to be looking at a band of brigands in the forest of Bondy, who have just heard that the provost-marshal has been discharged.' Voltaire and Condorcet were not more dismayed by the fall of the minister, than by the insensate delight which greeted the catastrophe. 'This event,' wrote Condorcet, 'has changed all nature in my eyes. I have no longer

the same pleasure in looking at those fair landscapes over which he would have shed happiness and contentment. The sight of the gaiety of the people wrings my heart. They dance and sport, as if they had lost nothing. Ah, we have had a delicious dream, but it has been all too short.' Voltaire was equally inconsolable, and still more violent in the expression of his grief. When he had become somewhat calmer, he composed those admirable verses,—*To a Man*:

[Pg 159]

Philosophe indulgent, ministre citoyen,  
Qui ne cherchas le vrai que pour faire le bien,  
Qui d'un peuple léger et trop ingrat peut-être  
Préparais le bonheur et celui de son maître,  
Ce qu'on nomme disgrâce a payé tes bienfaits.  
Le vrai prix de travail n'est que de vivre en paix.

Turgot at first showed some just and natural resentment at the levity with which he had been banished from power, and he put on no airs of theatrical philosophy. He would have been untrue to the sincerity of his character, if he had affected indifference or satisfaction at seeing his beneficent hopes for ever destroyed. But chagrin did not numb his industry or his wide interests. Condorcet went to visit him some months after his fall. He describes Turgot as reading Ariosto, as making experiments in physics, and as having forgotten all that had passed within the last two years, save when the sight of evils that he would have mitigated or removed, happened to remind him of it. He occupied himself busily with chemistry and optics, with astronomy and mechanics, and above all with meteorology, which was a new science in those days, and the value of which to the study of the conditions of human health, of the productions of the earth, of navigation, excited his most ardent anticipations. Turgot also was so moved by the necessity for a new synthesis of life and knowledge as to frame a plan for a great work 'on the human soul, the order of the universe, the Supreme Being, the principles of societies, the rights of men, political constitutions, legislation, administration, physical education, the means of perfecting the human race relatively to the progressive advance and employment of their forces, to the happiness of which they are susceptible, to the extent of the knowledge to which they may attain, to the certainty, clearness, and simplicity of the principles of conduct, to the purity of the feelings that spring up in men's souls.' While his mind was moving through these immense spaces of thought, he did not forget the things of the hour. He invented a machine for serving ship's cables. He wrote a plea for allowing Captain Cook's vessel to remain unmolested during the American war. With Adam Smith, with Dr. Price, with Franklin, with Hume, he kept up a grave and worthy correspondence. Of his own countrymen, Condorcet was his most faithful friend and disciple, and it is much to Condorcet's credit that this was so, for Turgot never gave way to the passionate impulses of the philosophic school against what Voltaire called the Infamous, that is to say, against the Church, her doctrines, her morality, her history.

[Pg 160]

We have already said that the keyword to Turgot's political aims and social theory was not Pity nor Benevolence, but Justice. It was Justice also, not temporary Prejudice nor Passion, that guided his judgment through the heated issues of the time. This justice and exact reasonableness it was impossible to surprise or throw off its guard. His sublime intellectual probity never suffered itself to be tempted. He protested against the doctrines of Helvétius's book, *de l'Esprit*, and of D'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*, at a moment when some of his best friends were enthusiastic in admiration, for no better reason than that the doctrines of the two books were hateful to the ecclesiastics and destructive of the teaching of the Church. In the course of a discussion, Condorcet had maintained that in general scrupulous persons are not fit for great things: a Christian, he said, will waste in subduing the darts of the flesh time that he might have employed upon things that would have been useful to humanity; he will never venture to rise against tyrants, for fear of having formed a hasty judgment, and so forth in other cases. 'No virtue,' replies Turgot, 'in whatever sense you take the word, can dispense with justice; and I think no better of the people who do your *great things* at the cost of justice, than I do of poets who fancy that they can produce great wonders of imagination without order and regularity. I know that excessive precision tends to deaden the fire alike of action and of composition; but there is a medium in everything. There has never been any question in our controversy of a capuchin wasting his time in quenching the darts of the flesh, though, by the way, in the whole sum of time wasted, the term expressing the time lost in satisfying the appetites of the flesh would probably be found to be decidedly the greater of the two.' This parenthesis is one of a hundred illustrations of Turgot's habitual refusal to be carried out of the narrow path of exact rationality, or to take for granted a single word of the common form of the dialect even of his best friends and closest associates. And the readiness with which men fall into common form, the levity with which they settle the most complex and difficult issues, stirred in Turgot what Michelet calls *férocité*, and Mr. Matthew Arnold calls *sæva indignatio*. 'Turgot was filled with an astonished, awful, oppressive sense of the *immoral thoughtlessness* of men; of the heedless, hazardous way in which they deal with things of the greatest moment to them; of the immense, incalculable misery which is due to this cause' (*M. Arnold*).

[Pg 161]

[Pg 162]

Turgot died on the 20th of March 1781, leaving to posterity the memory of a character which was more perfect and imposing than his performances. Condorcet saw in this harmonious union and fine balance of qualities the secret of his unpopularity. 'Envy,' he says, 'seems more closely to attend a character that approaches perfection, than one that, while astonishing men by its greatness, yet by exhibiting a mixture of defects and vices, offers a consolation that envy seeks.'

## FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Born in 1743, 1749, and 1759 respectively.
- [2] Among others, of a little volume still to be met with in libraries, *Sur la manière de préparer les diverses curiosités d'histoire naturelle* (1758).
- [3] *Vie de Turgot*, p. 8 (ed. 1847).
- [4] *Mémoires de Morellet*, i. 12 (ed. 1822).
- [5] Lettre à Madame de Graffigny. *Œuv.* ii. 793.
- [6] Letter to Turgot, *Œuv. de Condorcet*, i. 228. See also vi. 264, and 523-526.
- [7] Morellet, i. 133.
- [8] Whewell's *Hist. Induct. Sciences*, ii. 147-159.
- [9] *Œuv. de Turgot*, ii. 783. (Edition of Messrs. Eugène Daire and H. Dussard, published in the *Collection des Principaux Economistes*, published by Guillaumin, 1844.)
- [10] *Mémoires*, i. 16.
- [11] *Ib.* i. 20.
- [12] *Ib.* i. 19.
- [13] Morellet's *Mémoires*, i. 17-21; 262-270; and ii. 15.
- [14] Marmontel's *Mémoires*, bk. xiii.; Morellet, however, with persevering friendliness, denies the truth of Marmontel's picture (ii. 465).
- [15] Morellet, i. 21.
- [16] Dupont de Nemours. Condorcet's *Vie de Turgot*, pp. 8-10.
- [17] 'La nécessité de mentir pour désavouer un ouvrage est une extrémité qui répugne également à la conscience et à la noblesse du caractère; mais le crime est pour les hommes injustes qui rendent ce désaveu nécessaire à la sûreté de celui qu'ils y forcent. Si vous avez érigé en crime ce qui n'en est pas un, si vous avez porté atteinte, par des lois absurdes ou par des lois arbitraires, au droit naturel qu'ont tous les hommes, non seulement d'avoir une opinion, mais de la rendre publique, alors vous méritez de perdre celui qu'a chaque homme d'entendre la vérité de la bouche d'un autre, droit qui fonde seule l'obligation rigoureuse de ne pas mentir.'—Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire* (*Œuv.* iv. 33, 34).
- [18] *Œuv.* ii. 685. Morellet says that it was written by Loménie de Brienne, 19.
- [19] See the note of Dupont de Nemours, *ad loc.*
- [20] See Condorcet's éloge on Buffon (*Œuv.* iii. 335); and a passage from Bourdon, quoted in Whewell's *Hist. Induct. Sci.* iii. 348.
- [21] October, 1748. *Œuv.* ii. 782-784.
- [22] Condorcet's *Vie de Turgot*, 14.
- [23] Morellet, i. 140.
- [24] Written in 1751. *Œuv.* ii. 785-794.
- [25] 'On sera surpris que je compte l'étude des langues au nombre des inutilités de l'éducation,' etc.—*Emile*, bk. ii.
- [26] See Locke, *Of Education*, §§ 81, 184, etc.
- [27] 'La seule leçon de morale qui convienne à l'enfance, et la plus importante à tout âge, est de ne jamais faire de mal à personne,' etc. *Emile*, bk. ii. 'Never trouble yourself about these faults in them, which you know age will cure. And therefore want of well-fashioned civility in the carriage ... should be the parents' least care while they are young. If his tender mind be filled with a veneration for his parents and teachers, which consists in love and esteem and a fear to offend them; and with respect and good-will to all people; that respect will of itself teach these ways of expressing it, which he observes most acceptable,' etc.—Locke, *Of Education*, §§ 63, 67, etc.
- [28] 'Vous donnez la science, à la bonne heure; moi je m'occupe de l'instrument propre à l'acquérir,' etc.—*Emile*.
- [29] ii. 790.
- [30] *Œuv. de Condorcet*, vi. 245.
- [31] *Œuv.* ii. 672.
- [32] *Œuv.* ii. 586, *n.*
- [33] See Martin's *Hist. de la France*, iii. 422. Or Morison's *Life of Saint Bernard*, bk. iii. ch. vi.
- [34] *Les hommes en tout ne s'éclairent que par le tâtonnement de l'expérience.* P. 593.
- [35] *Esprit des Lois*, bk. xxiv. ch. ii.
- [36] See on this subject Finlay's *Mediæval Greece and Trebizond*, p. 197; and also, on the other hand, p. 56.

- [37] *Lettres sur la Tolérance*, II. vol. ii. 687.
- [38] Sur les progrès successifs de l'esprit humain. *Œuv.* ii. 597-611.
- [39] *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*, part iii. ch. ii.
- [40] Preface to *Essai sur les Mœurs*, *Œuv.* xx.
- [41] P. 601.
- [42] P. 603.
- [43] *Study of History*, Letter ii.
- [44] See vol. i. p. 290.
- [45] Foncin's *Ministère de Turgot*, p. 574.
- [46] See Mauguin's *Etudes Historiques sur l'Administration de l'Agriculture*, i. 353.
- [47] See vol. i. p. 31.

Transcribers' Notes:

Minor printer errors (omitted or incorrect punctuation) have been amended without note. Minor inconsistencies in hyphenation have been resolved where possible, or retained where there was no way to determine which was correct, again without note. Other errors have been amended, and are listed below.

List of Amendments:

Page 50—superstitution amended to superstition—"... treated as superstition by those ..."

Page 126—devolopment amended to development—"... lead gradually to the development of sound ..."

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CRITICAL MISCELLANIES (VOL. 2 OF 3),  
ESSAY 2: TURGOT \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE  
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic



works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or

distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state

law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.