*Maurepas,* against Turgot. The parlement refused to register the decrees; but the king held a *lit de justice,* which Voltaire proposed to call a *lit de bienfaisance,* and compelled the registration. This forced submission only aggravated the rancour of Turgot’s enemies, and the king had not the firmness to sustain his minister against the coalition. A vile conspiracy having poisoned Louis’s mind against him, he addressed to the king an eloquent letter in which he pointed out the grave perils impending over the throne and the state, and warned Louis that princes who are tempted to give themselves up to the direction of courtiers should remember the fate of Charles I. The minister received his dismissal on the 12th of May 1776. He had been in office only twenty months, of which he had lost six in repressing sedition, and for seven more had been con­fined to his bed by the gout ; but he had done during his tenure an extraordinary amount of work. Voltaire, how­ever, nobly avenged Turgot on his enemies in his *Épître à un Homme.* The fallen minister devoted his remaining years to his favourite studies, especially to physical science and the ancient poets ; he enjoyed the society of Lavoisier, D’Alembert, Condorcet, Bossut, Rochon, and Rouelle, and attended the meetings of the Academy of Inscriptions, of which he was elected vice-director in 1777. He also cor­responded with Price and Franklin, and, if we may believe Condorcet, with Adam Smith, whose acquaintance he had made at Paris in 1766.@@1 Turgot died at Paris on 18th March 1781.

Turgot’s official career is for ever memorable in the history of social politics. Never did a public man give himself to the service of the community with more earnest and unselfish devotion. He made it his object to convince before commanding, in order that his aims might be better understood and his directions more surely obeyed ; and, in issuing any instruction, making any decision, or advising any legislative act, he stated fully, by way of preamble, the grounds on which he proceeded. In the documents which he prepared on these occasions we have a body of valuable materials on administrative and economic questions ; some of them contain the substance of chapters in the *Wealth of Nations.* When he became minister, the finances were in what seemed a desperate condition, and the general state of affairs justified the prediction of Louis XV.—“après moi le déluge.” Turgot framed a vast plan of reform, at once administrative and economic, as the only hope for the salvation of the state. He speaks of his system of measures as intended for “ the regulation of the kingdom,” thus showing that he contemplated nothing less than a pacific revolution. But the first condition of success in such an effort was wanting, namely, the entire confidence and unfaltering support of the king, and the energetic exercise of the royal power in carrying out a policy of thorough reform against all adverse influences.@@2 Turgot’s struggle, though it failed from causes independent of himself, cannot be re­garded without profound sympathy and admiration. Nor was it without a large measure of immediate success. Whilst he scrupu­lously observed all the pecuniary obligations of the state, he greatly diminished the crushing deficit which he found on his accession to office, and re-established the public credit in such a degree that the Dutch bankers offered him a loan of sixty millions of livres at less than 5 per cent. His financial and other plans, of course, fell with him, and his most important measures were annulled ; but his policy and his writings exercised a lasting influence, and many of his projects were realized by the Revolution. Turgot is alto­gether one of the most massive and imposing figures of the 18th century. His whole character and public action are marked by an air of austere grandeur. Single-mindedness and veracity were of the very essence of his nature. Absolutely unbiased by selfish ends, he lived only for France, for truth, and for his duty. Be­lieving intensely in a definite system of social and economic princi­ples, which he had early formed by independent study and reflexion, he was prepared to carry them out with dauntless determination,

and with a lofty contempt for the interested or prejudiced opposi­tion they were sure to encounter. He has been accused of a doc­trinaire rigidity, and it is possible that, as a practical man, he wanted flexibility ; yet he was often willing, not indeed to disguise his convictions, but to postpone the realization of his plans. In his public acts he always showed a lively concern for the poor and the suffering ; in private life he was humane and benevolent ; in his relations with his friends, amiable and affectionate. Malesherbes, the only other minister of his time who was worthy to be his col­league, said of him that "he had the head of Bacon and the heart of L’Hôpital,” and, on the moral side at least, this was no exagger­ated estimate.

Possessed of a many-sided culture, Turgot wrote on a great variety of subjects—philosophic, scientific, and literary—though political economy is the branch of knowledge with which his name must always be most closely associated. Already in 1749, whilst a student at St Sulpice, he addressed to his friend, Abbé de Cicé, afterwards bishop of Auxerre, a *Letter on Raper Money,* in which he asserted, in opposition to the views of Law and his followers, doctrines similar to those now accepted by all competent authorities. In one of his discourses at the Sorbonne in 1750, moving into the higher regions of the philosophy of society, he makes a remarkable attempt to work out the pregnant conception, already enunciated by Pascal, of the continuity of the intellectual movement of our race, thus preparing the way for Condorcet’s *Esquisse,* and ulti­mately for the sociology of Comte. In 1753 he translated under the title of *Questions Importantes sur le Commerce,* a tract of Dr Josiah Tucker on the expediency of naturalizing foreigners. He contributed to the *Encyclopédie* the articles *Étymologie, Existence, Expansibility Fondations,* and *Foires et Marchés.* The first of these contains much that is just as well as interesting, though in the time of Turgot the subject could not yet be treated on genuinely scientific bases. In the second he undertakes a refutation of the Berkeleian theory. The third contains some ingenious suggestions in practical physics. The article on foundations maintains the right of the Government to dispose of them for the public good, suppressing them if hurtful, and directing the funds to more useful objects ; the policy advocated in it was afterwards carried into effect by the constituent assembly. In the paper on fairs and markets he argues that these are institutions adapted only for an immature state of commercial relations, and that more good would be done by liberating trade from the legislative fetters which every­where impeded it than by bestowing special privileges or other encouragements on particular localities as centres of exchange. In the *Éloge* of Gournay he combines with his tribute to the memory of his friend a vindication of the principle of industrial freedom, which that friend had condensed in the oft-repeated maxim, “Laissez faire, laissez passer.” To the period of Turgot’s intend­ance belong his unfinished *Valeurs et Monnaies,* intended to form an article in the *Dictionnaire de Commerce* of Morellet ; his *Letters* (to the Abbé Terray) *on the Freedom of the Corn- Trade* ; his memoir *Sur les Prêts d'Argent,* in which he insists on the necessity of leaving free the interest on loans ; and that on the principles which should direct legislation respecting mines and quarries, as well as the work on which his reputation as a systematic economist mainly rests, namely, his *Réflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses.* This treatise was written for two Chinese youths who had been sent over by the Jesuit missionaries to study in France. The work was first published in 1766 in the *Éphémérides du Citoyen,* edited by Dupont de Nemours, and speedily passed through four editions. It gives in brief compass a luminous statement of some of the most important principles relating to the economic con­stitution of societies—the division of labour, the origin and use of money, the nature of capital and the different modes of its employ­ment, the necessary rise of capitalist chiefs of industry, the legiti­macy of interest on loans, and the impossibility of arbitrarily fixing the rate of that interest. It unfortunately contains, along with many truths, the erroneous doctrines of the physiocrats on the exclusive productiveness of agriculture and on the consequent pro­priety of imposing taxes only on the land of a country. This book was erroneously represented by Condorcet as " the germ of the *Wealth of Nations,”* and has been spoken of by others as “anticipating some of the leading principles” of Smith. The truth is, most of what it contains had either been fully set forth by the earlier economists or was familiar to Quesnay and his group. It is, in fact, not a work of research but of exposition, and, regarded in this light, has real originality and may justly be pronounced a masterpiece.

Fuller information on the life, administrative labours, and writings of Turgot will be found in the following works :—Dupont de Nemours, *Notes et Mémoires sur la Vie, l' Administration, et les Ouvrages de Turgot,* 1782, and enlarged in his edition of Turgot’s works mentioned below; Condorcet, *Vie de Turgot,* 1786; A. Batbie, *Turgot, Philosophe, Économiste, Administrateur,* 1861 ; J. Tissot, *Turgot, sa Vie, son Administration, ses ouvrages* (a *mémoire couronne),* 1862 ; A. Neymarck, *Turgot et ses Doctrines,* 1885. The last-named contains the most complete treat­ment of the subject. See also an *Éloge* by Dupuy (1781) in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres,* vol. xlv. ; L. de Lavergne, Zes *Économistes Français au Dix-Huitième Siècle,* 1870, and Mr. John Morley s article in his *Critical Miscellanies,* 2d series, 1877. A collected edition of Turgot's

@@@1 Dugald Stewart, however, cannot find any evidence of a corre­spondence between Turgot and Smith. It has also been said that during this period Turgot corresponded with Hume. But little more than three months intervened between his dismissal and the death of Hume (25th August 1776) and there appears to be no trace of letters having passed between them in this interval. They had corresponded, but at a much earlier date ; see Burton’s *Life of Hume,* ii. 352, 381.

@@@2 Some have thought that the cardinal error in Turgot’s policy lay in his not having convoked the states-general ; that would, however, have been simply to open the flood-gates.