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SHOWING THE
OPERATIONS, EXPENDITURES, AND CONDITION OF THE
INSTITUTION FOR THE YEAR

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GENERAL APPENDIX

TO THE

SMITHSONIAN REPORT FOR 1878.

The object of this appendix is to illustrate the operations of the Institution by reports of lectures and extracts from correspondence, as well as to furnish information of a character suited especially to the observers and other persons interested in the promotion of knowledge.

CONDORCET: A BIOGRAPHY.

BY M. ARAGO.

[Translated for the Smithsonian Institution by M. A. Henry.]

INTRODUCTION.

During the latter years of his life, George Cuvier consented to spare a few moments from his immortal researches to make some notes for the benefit of his future biographers. One of these notes commences thus: "I have written so many eulogies, that it is not presumptuous to suppose that some one will write mine." This remark of the illustrious naturalist has reminded me that the last secretary of the old Academy of Sciences, himself the author of fifty-four biographies of academicians equally remarkable for their conception and their expression, has not yet received in this assembly the tribute which on many accounts is justly his due. The fact that we have owed this debt to his memory half a century is only a more powerful reason that it should be discharged without further delay. Our eulogies, as our memoirs, should have truth for their foundation and their object. But truth in regard to public men is difficult to attain, particularly when their lives have been passed in the midst of political storms. I therefore earnestly appeal to the few contemporaries of Condorcet whom death has spared, for correction of any error I may have made in spite of my careful efforts.

It has perhaps been observed that I have called my article a *biography* and not as usual an *historical eulogy*. It is in fact a detailed biography I have the honor to present to the Academy. Without desiring to establish a precedent for future secretaries, I will explain how in this instance the old form did not fulfil the end I desired.

Condorcet was no ordinary academician devoted alone to the labors of the closet: a speculative philosopher, and a citizen of unbiased judgment,—his life, his public and private conduct, and his works, were influential in literary, economical, and political associations. No one suffered more from the instability of public favor, jealousy, and fanaticism,—those three terrible scourges of reputation. In sketching a portrait, which it is my duty to render as faithful as possible, I cannot pretend to claim belief on mere assertion. It is not enough that for every characteristic feature I have endeavored with the greatest care to assure my own mind that my impressions are correct; I must enable the public to intelligently decide between the prevailing judgment and my own; it is necessary, therefore, to carefully examine and combat

the false views of those who, in my estimation, have never truly comprehended the majestic aspect presented to his generation by the great Condorcet.

If I venture to hope that I have found truth where others have fallen into error, it is because I have had access to private sources of information. The distinguished daughter of our former secretary, and her illustrious husband, General O'Connor, have placed their rich archives at my disposal, with a kindness, unreserve, and liberality for which I cannot sufficiently thank them. Many manuscripts of Condorcet finished or incomplete, his letters to Turgot, answers from the lord lieutenant of Limoges, the comptroller-general of finance, fifty-two unpublished letters of Voltaire, the correspondence of Lagrange with the secretary of the Academy of Sciences and with d'Alembert, letters of Frederick the Great, of Franklin, of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, of Borda, of Monge, &c.—such are the treasures I received from the honorable family of Condorcet. This is the material which has led me to clear and precise ideas of the part taken by our confrère in the political, social, and intellectual movement of the second half of the eighteenth century.

I have a fear that I have not sufficiently avoided a temptation resulting from the kindness of General and Mrs. O'Connor. In going over the manuscript confided to me, my mind was involuntarily impressed with the apprehension of the thousand accidents which might happen to those precious pages, and the result has been an uncommon number of quotations, and therefore an expansion of points which perhaps might better have been only alluded to. I am aware of the inconvenience of such elaboration, but consider as sufficient compensation that I have perhaps rescued from oblivion facts, opinions, and literary judgments of great value; that I have made to speak in my place many eminent personages of the last century.

One word as to the unusual length of this article. I am well aware of the demands it must make upon the patient attention of my hearers, and the great desirability of retrenchment even after the numerous omissions which had become necessary by the exigencies of a public reading, but I consider my mission unusual, and more than ordinarily solemn; in fact I am about to undertake the rehabilitation of a colleague, and that in every point of view, scientific, literary, philosophical, and political. Any feeling of self-love that might interfere with this end would manifestly be unworthy of the assembly I address as well as of myself.

INFANCY AND YOUTH OF CONDORCET—HIS STUDIES, HIS CHARACTER, HIS MATHEMATICAL LABORS.

Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat de Condorcet, formerly perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, was born on the 17th of September, 1743, in Picardy, in the small village of Ribemont, which had already given to the Academy the engineer Blondel, celebrated by the construction of

the gate of Saint Denis. The father of Condorcet, M. Caritat, a captain of cavalry, originally the Dauphin's, was the younger brother of the prelate whom we see successively from 1741 bishop of Gap, of Auxerre, and of Lisieux. He was also related to the cardinal of Bernis and the famous archbishop of Vienna, M. d'Yse of Saléon, who while bishop of Rodez made himself so prominent in the council of Embrun by his warm support of the Jesuits.

Condorcet had hardly attained his fourth year when he lost his father. The widow of Captain Caritat was very devotional in her tendencies. As, in her opinion, an infallible means of protecting her only son from the dangers of youth, she dedicated him to the Virgin and to the wearing of white garments. Condorcet accordingly wore for eight years the costume of a girl. This singular circumstance, as an effectual interdiction of all gymnastic exercises, retarded greatly the development of his physical powers. It also prevented him from entering the public schools, since a boy in petticoats could not fail to be an object of derision.

When he had attained his eleventh year, his uncle placed him under the care of one of the members of that celebrated Society of Jesus, around which began already to gather the political storm.

Not to trespass upon your time, permit me here a reflection. Madame Caritat de Condorcet, in the excess of her maternal love, subjected the childhood of the future secretary of the Academy to practices tending in more than one respect to superstition. The young Condorcet, as soon as he opened his eyes, was surrounded by a family composed of the highest dignitaries of the church and military officers, whose ideas were without exception aristocratic; his first guides, his first instructors, were Jesuits. Behold the result of so unusual a concourse of circumstances. In politics, a complete rejection of all idea of hereditary prerogative; in religion, scepticism carried to its utmost limits. This reflection confirmed by many observations of a similar character history can furnish, should it not calm somewhat the ardor with which political and religious parties, setting aside the rights of families, dispute by turns the monopoly of public instruction. Such a monopoly is dangerous only in a country where thought is chained; with the liberty of the press, reason, whatever may be done, will finally assert itself.

In the month of August, Condorcet, then thirteen years of age, carried off the second prize in the institution the Jesuits had established at Reims. In 1758 he commenced at Paris his mathematical studies, at the College of Navarre. His success was brilliant and rapid, for at the end of ten months he maintained a very difficult analytical thesis with so much distinction, that Clairaut, d'Alembert, and Fontaine, who examined him, saluted him as a future member of the Academy.

Such a horoscope from persons so eminent decided the future of the young mathematician. In spite of the resistance he foresaw on the part of his family, he resolved to devote himself to the pursuit of science,

and established himself at Paris for the purpose with his old master, M. Giraud de Kérondon.

When Condorcet left college he was already a profound thinker. I find in a letter of 1775, addressed to Turgot, and entitled *My confession of faith*, that at the age of seventeen years the young scholar had seriously reflected upon the moral ideas of justice and virtue, and upon the question whether (leaving aside other considerations) it was to man's interest to be just and virtuous. I give his solution of the question, although not sure of its originality with him. I am quite convinced, however, of the novelty of the extreme resolution to which it led him.

"A sentient being suffers from the evil which another sentient being experiences. In society, an unjust or criminal action cannot fail to injure some one. The author of such an action has, then, the consciousness of having caused suffering to one of his own kind. If the sensibility with which nature has endowed him remains intact, he must therefore suffer himself. In order, then, not to destroy his natural sensibility he must, in self-interest, strengthen his ideas of virtue and justice."

This conclusion followed naturally from the premises. It led the young Condorcet to renounce entirely the chase, and prevented him from killing even insects, provided that they did not harm him.

There were very few subjects in regard to which Condorcet had, even in early youth, vague and unformed opinions, and there is a beautiful harmony between the various periods of his laborious and agitated career. We see him, while still a youth, place kindness towards animals among the most efficacious means for preserving natural sensibility,—according to him, the principal source of all virtue. This idea controlled him throughout life. Even just before his death, in the admirable tract called *Advice of an outlaw to his daughter*, he writes these touching exhortations:

"My dear daughter, preserve in all its purity, all its force, the feeling which leads us to share the sorrow of every sentient being. Do not confine your sensibilities to the sufferings of the human race, but let your humanity extend even to animals; render those happy which belong to you; do not disdain to consider their well-being; be not insensible to their naive and sincere gratitude; cause them no useless pain.
• • • The want of foresight in animals is the only excuse for that barbarous law which impels them to uselessly destroy each other."

I must seize the first opportunity which offers to show you Condorcet resolutely following these principles. Such as he was in morals we find him later in politics.

The first fruit of the meditations to which Condorcet devoted himself with M. Giraud de Kérondon was a work entitled *Essay upon the integral calculus*. The author was only twenty-two when he presented it to the Academy. Allow me to preface with a few general reflections what I have to say of this treatise and of other mathematical works of Condorcet.

We can hardly mention in the vast domain of science more than eight or ten important discoveries which have not required the successive efforts of several generations of savans. Unhappily, inventors, from a mistaken feeling of self-love, are not ready to acknowledge to the historians of science the sources from which they have borrowed; they desire more to astonish than to instruct. They do not see it is far better to confess loyally their indebtedness than to incur the suspicion of bad faith.

In the sciences of observation every course of stones composing a complete edifice is more or less apparent. Books, academic collections, tell when and by whom these courses have been laid. The public may count the stages which must be surmounted by him to whom is reserved the happiness of laying the cap-stone. Each has his appropriate share of glory in the work of centuries.

Such is not the case with pure mathematics. The filiation of methods often escapes the most practised eye; at each step we find processes, theories without apparent connection with any which precede. Certain geometers move majestically in the upper regions of space, while it is not easy to say who prepared the road for their ascent. We may add that this road is usually established upon a scaffolding taken care of by no one when the road is completed. To collect scattered *débris* is a task unpleasant, ungrateful, and without glory, and, for this triple reason, is seldom undertaken.

The savans who devote themselves to pure mathematics without attaining the first rank must resign themselves to all these disadvantages. I have not yet mentioned the most important; it results from the necessity the historian of mathematics experiences of divesting his mind entirely of the light of his own century in judging of the works of former times. To this may be principally attributed the fact that Condorcet has never taken his true rank among geometers, and it is also on account of this difficulty that I have shrunk from the obligation of describing in a few lines the numerous mathematical works of our former secretary. Happily, as I have already said, I have in my hands unpublished articles of Lagrange, of d'Alembert, in which the memoirs of Condorcet are noticed at the time of their publication. Condorcet was thus judged by men of the utmost competence; an advantage by no means always secured to mathematical workers in the appreciation they receive from their contemporaries.

The first work of Condorcet, his *Integral calculus*, was examined by an academical committee, in May, 1765. The report of it, presented by d'Alembert, ends thus: "This work indicates great talent and deserves the approbation of the Academy."

Certain superficial critics, who scarcely looked at the work of Condorcet, spoke of it with ridicule and contempt, undoubtedly considering that the reporter of the academical committee treated it with culpable indulgence; and they seemed to have referred the matter to Lagrange, for this great geometer wrote to d'Alembert the 6th day of July, 1765: "The

Integral calculus of Condorcet appears to me well worthy of the praises with which you have honored it."

But setting these authorities aside, it is none the less established that this work contains the first serious well considered discussions of the conditions of integration of the ordinary differential equations of all orders, as well relatively to the integral of an immediately inferior order, as to the definitive integral. In it we also find the germs of several important works, since completed, on equations with finite differences.

The volume of the Academy of Sciences for 1772 contains the memoir in which the inventive spirit of Condorcet is most brilliantly manifested. The blind or systematic detractors of the mathematical ability of our former secretary are again controverted by the following verdict of Lagrange upon this production :

"The memoir is filled with great and fruitful ideas sufficient to have supplied the material for several works. The last article has especially impressed me by its elegance and utility. Recurrent series have so frequently been treated before, that the subject might have been considered exhausted. In this article, however, is a new application of these series, more important, in my opinion, than any which had been made before. It opens to us, so to say, a new field for the perfection of the Integral calculus."

Without leaving the field of pure mathematics, I might find in the academic collections of Paris, Berlin, Bologna, St. Petersburg, works bearing upon the most difficult questions of the science which would equally attest the ability of our former secretary, but I must hasten to notice some applications of analysis which did him no less honor. To do justice to the subject in any reasonable time I cannot proceed by order of date.

When we reflect upon the difficulties of all kinds astronomers have to overcome in order to determine with precision the orbits of the planets; when we consider, further, that it has been possible to harmonize the positions taken by the planets at the apogee, at the perigee, and all the intermediate points, only because they are constantly observable, we can hardly dare to conceive the hope of ever tracing in space the course of most of the comets, those vagrant stars which show themselves for a few days, only to be lost for centuries.

A very simple analytical calculus dissipates this impression. It shows that, speaking theoretically, three observations are more than sufficient to determine a comet's orbit, supposed to be parabolic, but the elements of this orbit are found to be so entangled in the equations that it appears difficult to free them without calculations of inconvenient length.

The problem thus regarded was not really solved, even after Newton, Fontaine, Euler, &c., had made it the subject of assiduous study. When the Academy of Berlin proposed it as a prize subject, the astronomers, instead of employing the methods of computation of these great geometers, still pursued the graphic systems, in which parabolas of card-board

of various parameters are used. The aim of the Academy was clearly expressed—to have the processes employed, at once direct and simple. The award of the prize was to have been made in 1774, but it was deferred. In 1778 Condorcet shared it with M. Tempelhoff. “Your beautiful essay,” wrote Lagrange to our confrère (June 8, 1778), “would have received the entire prize if the application of your theory had been made to any particular comet. This condition was in the programme.” The condition was certainly there, but Condorcet had, as he himself acknowledges, an extreme repugnance “for calculations which tax without pleasing the attention.” Of course it will be understood that numerical calculations are meant.

Among the great mathematical discoveries the world owes to France is a branch of calculus still very little appreciated, notwithstanding the services it has already rendered and those it still promises. This is the calculus of probabilities.

I do not hesitate to claim this discovery of the calculus of probabilities for our country, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to deprive her of the credit. To dignify as inventors of this calculus the authors of some numerical remarks, without precision upon the various ways of computing a certain sum of points, in the simultaneous throw of three dice, would be a baseless pretension, which even national prejudice could hardly excuse.

Among the eminent services this calculus has rendered to mankind we should mention in the first line the abolition of the lottery and several other games of chance, which were as traps set for cupidity, credulity, and ignorance. Thanks to the evident and simple principles upon which the new analysis is founded, it is no longer possible to disguise the frauds in which these financial combinations were formerly entrenched: discounts, annuities, tontines, insurances of all kinds, have lost their character of mystery and obscurity.

On this ground the application of probabilities has been admitted without much resistance. But when Condorcet, after some essays of Nicolas Bernoulli, made incursion, by means of the new calculus, into the domain of jurisprudence and of moral and political science, an opposition almost general warned him that he could not take possession of this field without a severe contest. To tell the truth, the contest still continues. In order to end it, the geometers, on the one hand, must consent to put the principles of probabilities in clear, precise terms, as free as possible from technical expressions; while, on the other hand (and this is much more difficult), the public must be led to recognize, that appreciation of certain very complex matters cannot be attained at a glance; that it is impossible to speak pertinently of figures without mastering first at least the principles of enumeration; finally that there exist truths, legitimate connections, outside of those, the rudiments of which may have been acquired in youth, or by the reading of classical works. To comprehend that civil and criminal tribunals should be con-

stituted so that the innocent may run very little risk of condemnation; in order also to comprehend that the chances of an unjust condemnation will be as much lessened as the judgment is rendered by the greater majority, the simple natural light of the most ordinary sentiments of humanity is all that is necessary. The problem becomes much more complicated when the question is to reconcile the proper guaranty of justice to the innocent with the need of society that the guilty shall not escape; simple reason here gives only vague results, to these calculation alone can give precision.

Let me repeat, that in judicial decisions there are certain phases, certain points of view, where resort may be had to calculation. By carrying into this labyrinth the torch of mathematical analysis, Condorcet not only proved his own courage, but opened an entirely new path. This, if pursued by geometers with a firm but cautious step, should lead to the discovery, in the social, judicial, and political organization of modern societies, of anomalies hitherto unsuspected.

It is quite evident that in its incursions into the domain of jurisprudence, the calculus of probabilities has for its object solely the numerical comparison of the decisions obtained with such or such a majority; to find the relative value of such or such number of witnesses. I may then in terms of severe reproof direct the attention of the public to the passages La Harpe, in his *Philosophie du XVIII Siècle*, has devoted to these applications of mathematics. It will be seen there, I dare say, with astonishment that the writer accuses our colleague of wishing to do away with testimony, and even written proof; of pretending to replace these advantageously by analytical formulæ. Instead of desiring to refute expressions so far from academical as "this is a supremely ridiculous use of science," it is "an extravagant conquest of the revolutionary philosophy," "this shows what insanity mathematics may produce," one regrets to see a man of real talent fallen into such incredible errors. As to the rest, it is a new proof that no one, not even an academician, can safely speak of that which he has not studied.

I must confess that the mathematical writings of Condorcet lack the elegant clearness which distinguish in so high a degree the memoirs of Euler and of Lagrange. D'Alembert, who was himself not irreproachable in this respect, endeavored, but with no great success, to induce our former secretary to take more pains. In March, 1772, he wrote to Lagrange: "I wish much that our friend Condorcet, who has so much sagacity, and such genius, had a better manner of expression, but it seems to be the nature of his mind to work in this way." This excuse for him has more foundation than might readily be accepted. Euler, d'Alembert, Lagrange, with an equal talent for mathematics, had each entirely different modes of working. Euler calculated without apparent effort, as men breathe, as the birds fly. In a letter I have under my eyes, dated 1769, d'Alembert thus speaks of himself to Lagrange: "It is not in my nature to occupy myself with one thing

long at a time. I leave a subject and resume it again as often as the humor takes me, without discouragement, and ordinarily this intermittent perseverance is successful." A third way in which genius works seems to be indicated by this passage, which I copy from a manuscript note from the author of the *Mécanique analytique*: "My occupations are reduced to studying geometry tranquilly and in silence. As I am not pressed and work more for my own pleasure than from duty, like the lord of a chateau who builds, tears down, and rebuilds again. I make, unmake, and remake until I am tolerably content with the results, which, however, rarely happens." It is well, perhaps, that variety and individuality exist in mathematical researches, as in everything else; that ways the most diverse may equally lead men of ability to such discoveries as the mutual attraction of celestial bodies, the cause of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, the cause of the precession of the equinoxes, and that of the libration of the moon.

It may be asked with very natural surprise how Condorcet could renounce so easily the success a scientific career promised him in order to throw himself into the discussions of a subject often very problematic—social economy, and into the heated arena of politics. If this was a fault, many others also were equally culpable. Moreover, here is the palliation: Early convinced that the human race is indefinitely perfectible, Condorcet (I copy) regarded its improvement "as one of the pleasantest occupations, one of the first duties of the man who has strengthened his reason by study and meditation." He expressed the same thought in other words when, in a letter to Voltaire, he speaks with regret of returning to geometry: "It seems cold to work only for vainglory, when one desires to be working for the public good." I do not admit the distinction; the vainglory Condorcet speaks of was more directly conducive to the benefit of humanity than the researches, economical and philosophical, which our confrère undertook with so much zest in the social community. The good done by science has roots deeper and more extended than those from any other source. It is not subject to the fluctuations, the sudden caprices, the retrograde movements which so often produce perturbations in society. The torch of science dissipates a hundred old and debasing prejudices, inveterate maladies of the moral and intellectual world. If Condorcet was inclined to insinuate that scientific discoveries have no direct or immediate influence upon the body politic, I will not revert to such well-known benefactions as the mariner's compass, gunpowder, and the steam-engine to refute the suggestion; I will take one fact from a thousand that show what important events may result through the agency of the simplest inventions.

In the year 1746 the Pretender had appeared in Scotland, and France was sending him powerful succor. The French fleet and the English squadron passed each other during a very dark night. The most vigilant of the watch saw nothing, gave no signal; but, unhappily for France and its ally, Admiral Kowles, on leaving London, was provided with a glass

of recent and very simple construction, known under the name of the *night-glass*—a glass in which the artist had sacrificed magnifying power to illumination. With this instrument he descried, outlined on the horizon, numerous vessels; he pursued them, reached them, captured them: the humble night-glass decided the destiny of the Stuarts.

We may explain the sadness felt by Condorcet on returning to mathematics by the fact that even the most illustrious of geometers were at that time discouraged. They believed that they had reached the final limits of the science. We may judge this from the following passage I copy from a letter of Lagrange to d'Alembert: "I believe that the mine is already too deep, and, as we discover no new branches, sooner or later it must be abandoned. Chemistry and physics proffer a richer reward, with easier research. The taste, too, of the century does not lie in our direction. It is not impossible that the pursuit of geometry in the academies will some time become as rare as the study of Arabic is to-day in the universities."

NOMINATION OF CONDORCET TO THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES—HIS JOURNEY TO FERNEY—HIS RELATIONS WITH VOLTAIRE.

I learn by a letter from d'Alembert to Lagrange that Condorcet might have entered the Academy in 1768, at the age of twenty-five years. His parents objected; to make science his official occupation was in their eyes derogatory to his station. He was received in 1769. His family yielded rather because tired of objecting than from conviction; for, six years later, Condorcet, already perpetual secretary of the Academy, wrote to Turgot, "Look with favor upon M. Thouvenel; he is the only one of my relatives who forgave me for not being a cavalry captain."

I must class among the first of Condorcet's academic works, an unpublished memoir upon the best organization of learned societies. This was intended for the Spanish Government. Influenced by the desire to calm the susceptibilities of the court of Madrid, the author has underrated certain phases of the question, but in it we find general views the fruit of an enlightened judgment and some curious anecdotes, which give the key, hitherto lost, to various provisions of our ancient academic rules.

It would show an entire want of understanding of the Spain of the XVIIIth century to dream of establishing an academy in which the Medina Celi, the d'Ossuna, &c., as representatives of the *nobility*, would have no place. Condorcet made this concession; he created honorary members, but stipulated for an equality of rights which would, he hoped, "raise the academicians in the eyes of the public, and perhaps in their own estimation, for savans unfortunately are not always philosophers." "To render," said Condorcet, "this union of the men of rank, who love science, and the savans devoted to her progress agreeable to both parties, this saying of Louis XIV should be kept in mind: 'Do you know why Racine and M. de Cavoye agree so well? Racine with Cavoye is a man of the court; Cavoye with Racine is a man of letters.'"

Perhaps I may be excused if, in this connection, I divulge from the manuscript of Condorcet the origin of an article of the first charter of our society relating to the nomination of men of rank :

“When we introduced,” said our confrère, “honorary members in the Academy, for fear that true savans might be troubled by the hauteur or abuse of power of the monks, Fontenelle proposed that the class of honorary members should be the only one to which they could be admitted.”

In the hope of inducing the Spanish authorities not to be influenced in their choice of members by the religious principles of candidates, Condorcet proposed to them this question : “In an academy composed of the heathen Aristotle, the Brahmin Pythagoras, the Mussulman Alhasen, the Catholic Descartes, the Jansenist Pascal, the Ultramontane Cassini, the Calvinist Huygens, the Anglican Bacon, the Arian Newton, the Deist Leibnitz, would there be any question of preference in regard to sect ? Think you there would be consideration in such an assembly for anything but pure geometry and physics ?”

Condorcet aspired at Madrid not only to secure for the director of the academy extended authority and large prerogatives ; he desired, to use his own words, “to free the savans from the indignity, especially distasteful to them, of being under the protection of subalterns—an evil, in fact, of all times and all countries.”

If the memoir of Condorcet ever sees the day, it may be considered that he pronounced too absolutely against the admission of foreigners among the resident members of the academies. If so, history may say in his defense that when he wrote it, the French Government was prodigal of its favors to foreigners of moderate ability, while it neglected men of superior talent born in the country. Witness, for example, an Italian,—Boscovich, provided with a large pension by the same ministers who refused to d’Alembert, notwithstanding his genius, and contrary to all rule, the reversibility of 1,200 livres of revenue, proceeding from the succession of Clairaut. See also this same individual, who is mentioned very slightly by Lagrange and d’Alembert in the letters I have in hand, attempting to enter the Academy without waiting for a vacancy and on the point of success, thanks to the foolish admiration entertained for any one with a foreign termination to his name.*

Until 1770 Condorcet seemed desirous of confining his attention exclusively to mathematical and economical studies. After this period he threw himself into the world of literature. There will be no hesitation in discerning the cause of this revolution, when we remark that it coincides in date with the journey made by d’Alembert and Condorcet to Ferney, the home of Voltaire. Upon his return the young academician of twenty-seven years wrote to Turgot, intendant of Limousin, “I found Voltaire so full of activity and enthusiasm that one would be tempted to believe him immortal, if a slight injustice towards Rousseau and too

*This paragraph scarcely does justice to the distinguished Italian physicist.

great sensibility in regard to the follies of Fréron did not prove him to be human." With reference to some articles in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (then unpublished), articles the importance and originality of which may be a matter of doubt, Condorcet says: "Voltaire works less for reputation than for the good of his cause. He should not be judged as a philosopher but as an apostle." Could there be an appreciation of certain works of Voltaire of greater delicacy and taste?

Voltaire became a sort of Dalaï-Lama of the intellectual world. His friends were undignified courtiers, blindly devoted to the caprices of their master, and endeavoring to obtain, by outrageous flattery and unlimited complaisance, one of those letters from Ferney, which then seemed in the eyes of the world a certain token of immortality. As for Condorcet, a few words will show his opinion of this foolish adulation.

Madame Necker received in 1776 some very flattering verses from Voltaire. Her husband, successor of Turgot as comptroller-general of finances, received a large meed of praise also in these verses. All this was undoubtedly a matter of little consequence, but Condorcet's rigid sense of propriety was disturbed; he considered it an act of weakness, and feared that the reputation of the philosopher would suffer by it; his uneasiness and displeasure were vented in expressions of considerable severity. "I am sorry for these verses. You do not consider the weight of your name. * * * You are like that class of people who would leave a Jupiter to applaud a harlequin. * * * I know your piece only by hearsay, but those who have read it tell me that apropos of Mme. Enveloppe (M. and Mme. Necker) you speak of Cato. This reminds me of a young foreigner who once said to me, 'I have seen three great men in France, Voltaire, d'Alembert, and the Abbé de Voisenon.'"

One more example of his independence and loyal frankness: Voltaire was desirous of committing to the stage, at Paris, the tragedy he had composed in his old age, *Irene*. Condorcet, dreading a failure, resisted the pressing request of Voltaire to assist him in this step, with judicious and firm criticisms, couched in respectful language, however, in which is never lost the disciple addressing the master. Thus, for example, in a letter at the end of 1777: "See, sir! See! you have accustomed us to perfection in action and in character, as Racine has accustomed us to perfection in style. * * * If we are severe it is your own fault."

Condorcet was a profound geometer. He belonged to that class of intellectual men who, even when witnessing the most beautiful tragedies of Corneille and Racine, would mentally ask at each scene, what does that prove? Voltaire surely *ought to* have cared little for the criticism of a judge so incompetent. Listen and decide:

"FERNEY, *January 12, 1778.*

"MY UNIVERSAL PHILOSOPHER: Your discretion is astonishing and your friendship day by day more dear to me. I am grieved and ashamed to have differed from you in regard to the last effort of an old man of eighty-four years. I believed, upon the faith of a few tears shed in my

presence by those who knew how to read and to assume without feeling passion, that if my little effort was well depicted and well acted it might produce at Paris a happy effect. I was, unfortunately, mistaken. I was aware of most of the faults you have the kindness to point out, and I add to them many others. I was endeavoring to make a picture out of a rough sketch, when your criticisms, dictated by friendship and by reason, came to increase my doubts of its worth. We can do nothing well in the arts of imagination and taste without the aid of an enlightened friend."

I feel that I am dwelling too long upon a point of the life of Condorcet which would seem to be already sufficiently illustrated, but I am irresistibly impelled to give a third and last incident of the frankness of Condorcet, which, in this case, truly amounted to a beautiful and noble action.

Voltaire and Montesquieu, did not like each other. Montesquieu even allowed this to be too evident. Voltaire, irritated by some pamphlets published by Montesquieu, wrote at Ferney, against the *l'Esprit des Loix*, several articles, which he sent to his friends in Paris, asking to have them published. Condorcet did not yield to the demand, imperious as it was, of the illustrious old man. "Do you not see," he remonstrated, "that to what you say to-day will be opposed your former praises of Montesquieu? His admirers, displeased by the way in which you take up some of his erroneous statements, will seek for similar inadvertencies in your own works, and they cannot possibly fail to find such, for even Cæsar describing his campaigns in his Commentaries, commits some inaccuracies. * * * You will, I hope, pardon me for not complying with your request in this matter, which you seem to have so much at heart. My attachment compels me to tell you what is for your advantage and not what will please you. If I loved you less, I would not dare to oppose you. I know the faults of Montesquieu, but he is worthy enough for you to overlook them." After this noble and loyal language, which was well-calculated to rectify wrong ideas, it cannot be said that all the philosophers of the XVIIIth century were the vassals of Voltaire. The short response of the illustrious old man to the remonstrances of Condorcet is a document so valuable to the history of our literature that I cannot allow it to remain hidden in my portfolio; here it is:

"There is but one way to respond to what a true philosopher wrote me on the 20th of June. I thank him very sincerely. One ought not to blush to go to school, even if of the age of Methuselah * * * I repeat my thanks."

CONDORCET SUCCESSOR OF GRANDJEAN DE FOUCHY, AS SECRETARY OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES—APPRECIATION OF HIS EULOGIES OF THE ACADEMICIANS.

Fontenelle had given so much *éclat* to the functions of the secretary of the Academy of Sciences that at his death no one wished to succeed

him. After much sollicitation, Mairan consented to occupy provisionally the place in order to allow the learned body time enough to make a choice they would not afterwards regret. It was finally concluded that the only way to avoid all disagreeable comparison, was to give to the nephew of Corneille a successor who would not aspire to imitate him, and who would disarm all criticism by his extreme modesty. It was under these circumstances that in 1743 Grandjean de Fouchy became the official organ of the old Academy.

Fouchy had occupied this position for more than thirty years when Condorcet entered the learned company. The infirmities of the perpetual secretary and his age made him desirous of a collaborator, and for this purpose he cast his eyes upon his youngest confrère. This was to create survivorship, to establish a precedent, and produced violent opposition in the Academy.

After an excitement rarely caused by the discussion of an abstract principle, the question finally stood as follows: The successor of Fontenelle, shall it be Bailly or Condorcet? The struggle could not fail to be noble and loyal in all that concerned these two gentlemen. Condorcet, throughout his life modest in the extreme, thought it necessary to give some evidence of his fitness for the place, of his facility in the art of writing, and undertook to compose some academic eulogies. The regulation of 1699 imposed upon the perpetual secretary the obligation of paying a tribute of respect to the memory of the academicians removed by death. This is the origin of the numerous biographies, often eloquent, always ingenious, left by Fontenelle, and confined all of them to the interval comprised between the last year of the XVIIth century and 1740. Fontenelle in his annals of the society does not take up the past, but commences only with the time of his entrance into office. The admirable collection he has left us, therefore, leaves a gap of thirty-three years. The academicians, deceased between 1666 and 1699, had no biographer, and it is in this third of a century that Condorcet found the subjects for the exercise of his pen, and among them such savans as Huygens, Roberval, Picard, Mariotte, Perrault, Roemer, &c. These, his first eulogies, are written with a profound knowledge of the subjects treated by the academicians, and in a simple, clear, and concise style. Condorcet said, in sending them to Turgot, "If I were able to give them more brilliancy of expression they would be more pleasing, but nature has not endowed me with the gift of such union of words. If I attempt anything of the kind, one word, astonished at another, starts back in affright to see itself so associated. I am humiliated before those whom in this respect nature has treated so much better than myself." Condorcet was mistaken in his low estimate of work which procured for him a large majority in the Academy, and of which Voltaire, d'Alembert, and Lagrange always spoke with great esteem. On the 9th of April, 1773, d'Alembert wrote to Lagrange, "Condorcet merited well the place of secretary on account of the excellent eulogies he has published of the

academicians deceased since 1666. * * * They have had with us a complete success." "Your work," said Voltaire on the 1st of March, 1774, "is a monument to you. You always appear the master of those of whom you speak, but a master kind and modest; a king describing his subjects." Such commendation gave to these first essays of Condorcet a rank from which malevolence has in vain endeavored to reduce them.

Condorcet had hardly entered into his relation with M. de Fouchy, when he was commissioned to write several eulogies, among others that of the geometer Fontaine, deceased August 21, 1771. Difficulties unforeseen immediately assailed him. When he wrote the biographies of the earlier members of the Academy of Sciences a century had placed all things in their proper light—persons, labors, and discoveries,—and there was nothing for the writer to do but to express, in terms more or less happy, the irrevocable and already known decrees of posterity. Now he found himself in contact with the requirements, almost always blind, of families; with contemporary susceptibility sometimes of friends, always of rivals; finally with opinions based upon prejudice or personal animosity, than which nothing in the intellectual world is more difficult to eradicate. I suspect that Condorcet exaggerated somewhat these difficulties, although they were undoubtedly real, for he certainly spent an enormous amount of labor on his first eulogy of a contemporaneous academician. In his correspondence with Turgot we find him about the middle of 1772 already very busy with Fontaine. In the beginning of September he sent to the illustrious intendant a first copy of his work. The same eulogy, retouched and altered, in September, 1773, was on its way to Limoges. This, it must be admitted, was a long time to devote to an article of only twenty-five octavo pages. However, the maxim of Boileau was not in this instance without fruit. D'Alembert, writing to Lagrange, calls the eulogy of Fontaine a *chef-d'œuvre*. Voltaire says, in a letter of the 24th of December, 1773, "You have made me pass a half hour very agreeably. *

* * * You have relieved the dryness of the subject by a moral treatment noble and profound * * * which will delight all honest men. * * * If you need your copy I will return it to you, asking permission to make one for myself." Voltaire asking permission to copy for his own use a eulogy of Fontaine! Could there be a greater compliment than this?

To the eulogy of Fontaine succeeded that, not less piquant, not less ingenious, not less philosophic, of Condamine. The Academy and the public at large received it with unanimous applause. With the exception of the years 1775 and 1776, during which the Academy experienced no loss, the secretary had to provide annually until 1788, three, four, and even eight similar compositions. The style of these latter eulogies of Condorcet is grave and noble. There is in them no trace of affectation of manner or of effort; no desire to produce effect by expression, to cover, by striking or eccentric language, feebleness of thought.

Our confrère resisted with the more assurance the invasion of bad taste, the confusion of style, and the dithyrambic tendencies attempted by a certain school, because encouraged by Voltaire, who thus writes to him from Ferney, on the 18th of July, 1774: "It is without doubt a misfortune to be born in a century of bad taste, but what will you have? The public for eighty years have been content to drink bad brandy at their repasts."

It is now generally considered as a matter of hearsay that Condorcet lacked in his eulogies force, warmth, elegance, and sensibility. I differ from this opinion without fear of finding myself alone. In fact what have those who complain of his want of force to say to the following portrait of the academicians, happily few in number, whose names are connected with factious intrigue?

"Such intrigues have always been the work of those men tormented with the feeling of their own insignificance, who seek to obtain by noise what they fail to merit by worth, who having no right to reputation of their own, would destroy that merited by others, and overcome by petty malice the men of genius who oppress them with the weight of their renown."

To the critics who have accused Condorcet of a want of sensibility, I oppose the following passage from the unpublished eulogy of fathers Jacquier and Le Seur: * * * "Their friendship was not of that vulgar sort produced only by conformity of tastes and interests. It had its origin in a natural and irresistible attraction. In these deep and delicious friendships each endures the sufferings of his friend and enjoys all his pleasures. He has not a thought, he has not a sentiment, which his friend does not share; and if he is not always one with him, it is solely on account of the preference he gives him over himself. This friend is not only a man that one prefers to all other men, he is a being apart, whom none resembles; it is not his qualities, his virtues that one loves in him, for others may have these and yet not be loved the same; it is himself that one loves, and because it is himself. Those who have never experienced the sentiment can alone deny that it exists. * * * From the instant they encountered each other at Rome, everything was in common between them; troubles, pleasures, labors—glory even, the good, of all others, that two men very rarely share in good faith. Still each of them published separately a few articles, but these were of little importance, and in the judgment of him to whom they belonged not worthy to appear with the name of his friend. They desired perfect equality in the situations they occupied; if one obtained a distinction, he was not content until he had procured a similar honor for his friend. * * * Father Jacquier had the misfortune to survive his friend. Father le Seur succumbed to his infirmities in 1770. Two days before his decease he appeared to have lost all consciousness. 'Do you know me?' said Father le Jacquier to him a few moments before his death. 'Yes,' answered the dying man; 'I have just resolved a difficult equa-

tion with you.' Thus, in the midst of the destruction of his organs he had not forgotten the objects of his studies, and remembered the friend with whom he had all in common. Father Jacquier was forcibly taken from the arms of the dying man by the friends who, to use Jacquier's own expression, did not wish to lose them both. He resumed the chair his health had obliged him to vacate; caring little to prolong the days no longer brightened by friendship, he still wished to fill them with useful labor and thus divert the feelings of sorrow which nothing could cure. He knew better than to add the weight of time to that of grief. For minds that suffer, leisure is the most cruel torture."

The valuation Condorcet has given of the divers virtues of Condamine could, if we are not mistaken, be placed, without disadvantage, beside the eloquent speech Buffon addressed to the illustrious traveler on the day of his reception by the French Academy. It would bear as well comparison in elegance with the eulogy of the same academician, pronounced by the Abbé Delille, his successor.

The biographical compositions of Condorcet please because they contain what should naturally be their essence. The history of the human mind is in them viewed from a high standard. In the choice of details the author has constantly in view instruction and utility rather than entertainment. Without trespassing in the least upon truth, whose demands he places before every other interest or consideration, Condorcet is constantly ruled by the thought that the dignity of the savant is to a certain degree that of science; and that any applause which might be accorded to a witty portrayal of a ridiculous incident, would be a poor return for even a slight wrong done to the most modest branch of human knowledge.

We expect too much of *Monsieur plus que Fontenelle*, as Voltaire calls our confrère in several unpublished letters I have in hand, if we hope to find in his eulogies any chapters devoted entirely to the subsequent history of the sciences. Condorcet did not commit the error of giving to his auditors food stronger than they could digest.

Our former secretary was especially distinguished in his eulogies by the utmost impartiality, by philosophic thought, and by the interest he gave to the most simple biographical circumstances, by his constant abnegation of all personal feeling, of all party spirit, of all self-love. Condorcet described his own works, as well as those of Franklin, when he said of the latter: "We seek in them in vain for a line which could be suspected of having been written for his own glory."

The long career of Franklin certainly does not offer a better instance of frank, true modesty than is contained in this passage from the eulogy of Fontaine: "I thought, at one time, said this geometer, that a young man with whom I had been brought into connection had more talent and might attain greater eminence than myself. I was jealous of him, but I have not feared him since."—"The young man in question," added Condorcet, "is the author of this eulogy."

The class of the envious, always numerous and active, and ready to create disturbance, received through the mouth of Fontenelle a lesson of good sense and of wisdom, from which, unfortunately, they profited little. The first edition of Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV* was about to appear. This was too good an occasion to irritate two great men against each other to be neglected. "How am I treated in this work?" asked Fontenelle. He was answered: "Voltaire commences by declaring that you are the only living person for whom he would make exception of the rule he had made for himself to speak only of the dead." "Stop," said the secretary of the Academy, "I do not wish to hear more. With anything Voltaire may add to that I must be content." Notwithstanding some criticism, Buffon, the immortal author of the *Histoire Naturelle*, would surely have been equally satisfied could he have heard the following tribute Condorcet renders to his eloquence: "The passages which escape from the pen of Buffon show the sensibility as well as the pride of his nature; but always controlled by a superior judgment, they make us feel, so to say, as if we were conversing with a pure intelligence, with only enough humanity to understand us and to be interested in our weakness. * * * Posterity will place the works of this great naturalist beside the dialogues of the disciple of Socrates and the teachings of the philosopher of Tusculum. * * * M. de Buffon, more varied, more brilliant, more prodigal of images than the two great representatives of Greece and Rome, joined facility to energy, grace to majesty. His philosophy, with a character less pronounced, is more varied and less melancholy. Aristotle seems to have written only for savants, Pliny for philosophers, M. de Buffon for all enlightened men."

After this quotation shall I injure Condorcet if I admit that Buffon never testified any kindness for him; that he was the most active friend of his rivals for the place of perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences and for that of member of the French Academy; that the idea of an academic censure, strongly recommended to the ministers of Louis XVI, and which constantly threatened the historian of our labors, originated with Buffon. It is worthy of note that the bickerings which at this time disturbed the Academy, as d'Alembert writes to Lagrange, on the 15th of April, 1775, to so great a degree "as to dishearten us for all serious study" and in which the illustrious naturalist took a prominent part, are revealed to us by the correspondence of La Harpe and numerous unpublished articles from other sources, but we seek in vain for any trace of them in the eulogies of the loyal secretary.

Fontenelle left a gap in his eulogies of deceased academicians, from 1699 to 1740; was this by design? One is tempted to think so, on observing among the omitted the Duke d'Escalonne, the famous Law and Père Gouye. I will leave no doubt of the kind in regard to Condorcet. If he did not make a eulogy of the Duke de La Vrillière, it was because in his eyes the title of honorary bestowed by the Academy

did not render honorable the minister who all his life made a cruel and scandalous use of the *lettres de cachet*. His timid friends calculated with uneasiness the danger of irritating M. de Maurepas, prime minister and brother-in-law of M. de la Vrillière. Condorcet answered: "Would you prefer that I should be persecuted for a foolish act rather than for a just and moral one? Do you not think I will in the future be more easily pardoned for silence, than for speech, since I am resolved, if compelled to speak, to tell exactly the truth?"

EULOGY OF MICHEL DE L'HÔPITAL—LETTER OF A THEOLOGIAN TO THE AUTHOR OF THE DICTIONARY OF THREE CENTURIES—LETTER OF A LABORER OF PICARDY TO A. M. NECKER, PROHIBITIONIST—REFLECTIONS UPON THE COMMERCE IN GRAIN—NEW EDITION OF PASCAL'S THOUGHTS—ENTRANCE OF CONDORCET INTO THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

Hitherto we have followed step by step the geometer, the perpetual secretary of the Academy. Now we see our confrère throw himself with polemic ardor into literary and philosophical controversy, appearing before the public, often anonymously, in order, he said, not to add his personal enemies to the enemies of his cause. Condorcet was already by fair title secretary of our society when the French Academy issued as the subject for a competitive essay the eulogy of Michel de l'Hôpital. Captivated by the scope, the interest, and also the beauty of the theme, our confrère entered the lists with all the ardor natural to a young man of unknown antecedents and with a reputation to make. He did not obtain the prize, however; the preference was given to a paper, to-day completely forgotten, by the Abbé Remi. Some of the causes for his disappointment have become known to me, and it may perhaps be worth while to notice them.

What did the French Academy desire in proposing the eulogy of de l'Hôpital for a prize essay? A superficial review of the literary work of the illustrious chancellor, a general sketch of his political and administrative acts, a homage to his memory, written in a more or less florid or exalted style. To-day this kind of composition is little to the taste of the public; indeed what the celebrated assembly demanded could hardly be dignified with the name of a discourse.

It was not thus Condorcet regarded the subject presented to him. In his mind utility was preferred to every other merit. The life of l'Hôpital seemed to him to offer a salutary example to those finding themselves in difficult circumstances obliged to choose between repose and the public welfare. He did not hesitate as to the character of his essay. It was a history of the life, not merely a eulogistic notice of l'Hôpital, he felt impelled to write.

The life of l'Hôpital: but this is a history of a century of terrible events, of a long succession of shameful disorders, of barbarous and

cruel actions, a century of intolerance and fanaticism. The field was large, but was not too much for the power, the knowledge, and the zeal of the writer. In his beautiful work Condorcet first shows us l'Hôpital in Italy, with the constable of Bourbon, in the parliament and council of Bologna. We then see him at the head of the finances. Later it is the chancellor, the minister, the statesman whose acts are revealed to the reader. The history of a life so full of incident could not properly be reduced to the limits of an article which could be read in sixty minutes—the time prescribed by the academy. Condorcet could not comply with this limitation, and his eulogy was three times longer than the programme allowed. This was sufficient in itself to make the rejection of the essay a foregone conclusion, to say nothing of the criticism the work excited in the literary Areopagus, of which the author of the Lyceum has preserved some specimens.

According to La Harpe, the style of the eulogy of l'Hôpital lacked harmony. The charge would have been a graver one had he said (if it could be said) that it lacked character, nerve, accuracy; that the ideas were neither new nor profound, and in that case it would be only necessary as a refutation to refer to such passages as the following:

“If Bertrandi (keeper of the seal of Henry II) has escaped the execration of succeeding centuries, it is because always petty even in the midst of his greatest power, always subaltern, even while occupying the highest places, he was too insignificant to attract attention.”

“All the citizens wept over the ruin of their country. l'Hôpital alone did not despair. Hope never abandons noble souls. The love of the public good had with the chancellor all the characteristics, all the illusions of a veritable passion; l'Hôpital did not ignore obstacles, but felt his power to cope with them.”

But “the obscurity of the style.” In this criticism, I do not know what La Harpe means by “phrases which double upon each other.” He is certainly clear enough, however, when he complains of Condorcet's want of dignity in speaking of vine-poles, billets of wood, and little pies, in the eulogy of a chancellor. We ought to hope in the spirit of loyalty that this remark of La Harpe's did not influence the decision of the Academy. Would you know where the expressions occur which made the critic so indignant? They are in a note, in which with reason the author denounces the strange, we might better say the deplorable regulations, which the prohibitive system suggested to even such minds as that of Michel de l'Hôpital. Yes, gentlemen; the fact cannot be denied; the virtuous chancellor prohibited the crying of little patties in the streets, in order—his words are unequivocal—to insure the pastry-shops from idleness and the people from indigestion. We may laugh in these days, we may be astonished, but none the less the sale of fagots, and vine-poles also, was forbidden. The laws of the time even determined the form of breeches and of farthingales. The fact that l'Hôpital could approve such restrictions, shows clearly to what point even men of genius may yield to

the influence of their century. But I do not know in truth what influence Condorcet would have obeyed if he had substituted elaborate phrases for the technical expressions that l'Hôpital, even with his poet hand, employed, if he had used ornamental style apropos of farthingales, of billets of wood, and little patties.

Voltaire certainly did not agree with La Harpe and his friends in their opinion of Condorcet, for, on the 3d of October, 1777, he writes to M. de Vaines, "I have just read, with great satisfaction, l'Hôpital, by Condorcet; all that he does bears the mark of a superior mind." I find expressions no less significant in an unpublished letter of Franklin: "I have read with extreme pleasure your excellent eulogy of l'Hôpital. I knew before that you were a great mathematician; now I consider you one of the first statesmen of Europe." Such praise is surely equal in value to an academic reward.

"The *Lettre d'un Théologien* to the author of the *Dictionnaire des trois Siècles* is one of the most piquant articles published for several years. This pamphlet, unaccompanied by the name of the author, has been generally attributed to the illustrious patriarch of Ferney. Never has he been more happy in his criticisms, never more good-natured in his railery." It is in such terms that a correspondence since published and become celebrated announced, in 1774, the anonymous pamphlet of Condorcet.

Voltaire, to whom the authorship was then unknown, thus writes to our confrère on the 20th of August, 1774: "There are, in the *Letter of a Theologian*, passages of humor, as well as of eloquence, worthy of Pascal." He then proceeds to prove that, notwithstanding a prevalent opinion, the Abbé de Voisenon could not be the author of a piece so remarkable. As to himself (Voltaire), he ought not to be suspected of it, for the letter indicates a profound knowledge of mathematics; and, he adds, "In consequence of the trouble I experienced with the elements of Newton, I renounced, forty years ago, that class of studies."

The audacity of the *Letter of a Theologian*, since he was suspected of writing it, caused Voltaire great uneasiness, and he took every occasion to disown its authorship. "I do not wish," he said, "at the age of eighty-three to die elsewhere than in my bed." He thus speaks of it to M. d'Argental (August 17, 1774): "One could not be more eloquent nor yet more foolhardy. This work, as dangerous as it is admirable, will undoubtedly furnish means of attack to the enemies of philosophy. * * * I desire neither the glory of having written the *Letter of a Theologian* nor the punishment which will follow it. I am sorry that so good a cause has been injured by being defended with too much spirit." Again Voltaire writes: "How could any one dare, unless in command of two hundred thousand soldiers, to publish so audacious a work?"

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self-love was alarmed. He is evidently far from considering this supposition of the public injurious to him as a man of letters.

To such evidence as this would I call the attention of those who have considered Condorcet's style wanting in eloquence and depth.

In the society of d'Alembert our former confrère became a geometer. Turgot in his turn inspired him with a taste for social economy. Their ideas, their hopes, their sentiments became identical. It would really be impossible to mention a single point in science upon which Turgot and Condorcet differed, even in an almost imperceptible shade. They were both persuaded that in matters of commerce "entire and absolute liberty is the only law of utility and even justice." They believed that the protection accorded "to one special branch of industry was detrimental to all; * * * that the minute precautions with which legislators deemed it necessary to load their regulations were the fruits of timidity and ignorance, and without any compensation, the source of inconvenience, intolerable vexations, and real losses.

Turgot and Condorcet were, if possible, still more closely united upon the special question of commerce in grain. They maintained that entire liberty in this commerce was of equal importance to owners, to cultivators, to consumers, to employés; that there was no other remedy for the effects of local scarcity, no other means of reducing the mean price and diminishing the rate of variations, a matter of still more importance, for mean prices regulate the wages of the workmen. If, on the one hand, these rigorous principles were a formal discouragement to any yielding to disorderly clamors, or popular prejudices, on the other hand the two economists proclaimed distinctly that in times of scarcity the government ought to make provision for the poor. This relief should not, however, be dispensed blindly, but should be the price of work.

Turgot and his friend professed the maxim that there exist for every man certain natural privileges of which no lot in life can legitimately deprive him. They considered among the most important of these the right to dispose of his own intelligence, his own hands, and his own labor. Our philosophers also advocated the abolition of a number of tedious formalities, often absurd and always costly, which made the condition of the workmen an odious slavery. If the mastership and the wardenship were the despair of artisans and city workmen, the statutes of labor as severely affected the workmen of the rural districts. The labor statutes condemned to work without wages men who were dependent upon those very wages for their living. They allowed prodigality in labor because this cost the royal treasury nothing. The form of the requisitions, the hardness of the laws, the rigor of the penalties, added humiliation to misery. Turgot and Condorcet were the most ardent adversaries of this cruel servitude.

The two philosophers were not men who become tolerant of crime through seeing it constantly committed. The slave-trade excited their

utmost abhorrence. If I had time and space I could here transcribe a quite recent letter from M. Clarkson, in which this venerable gentleman renders touching homage to the active efforts of Condorcet in behalf of the holy crusade against this cruel practice, which had absorbed his long life. It is therefore very appropriate that our David has placed among the bas-reliefs of his beautiful statue of Guttenberg the noble figure of the former secretary of the Academy, as one of the most ardent enemies of the shameful brigandage, which for two centuries depopulated and corrupted the African continent.

At the death of Louis XV the public voice called Turgot to the ministry. First the marine was confided to him; a month after (August 24, 1774), the finances. In his new and brilliant position Turgot did not forget the intimate confidant of his economical and philosophical thoughts; he appointed Condorcet comptroller of currency. Condorcet accepted this favor in terms worthy to be recorded.

“It is said in a certain quarter that you are very generous with the public funds when you desire to oblige your friends. I should be sorry to give these foolish words any appearance of foundation. I pray you therefore do nothing for me in the way of remuneration just now. Although not rich, I am not pressed. Let me fill the place; trust me with some important work; wait until my efforts have truly deserved a reward.”

Turgot during his ministry conceived, in 1775, a general plan for the interior navigation of the kingdom. This plan embraced a vast system of works for the improvement of the small as well as the large rivers, and for the excavation of canals to unite the natural ways of communication. The celebrated minister, in this important matter, had to defend himself equally from the lovers of display, from those who seeing certain rivers separated on the map by only a little white paper, draw lines from one to the other and call these meaningless scratches their plans; from those, finally, who do not know how to gauge the power of running water, nor how to calculate its effects. Therefore he hastened to attach to the administration three geometers of the Academy of Sciences, d’Alembert, Condorcet, and Bossut. Their mission was to examine plans and to supply any hydrographic information that might be required.

These operations, undertaken on so grand a scale, were stopped by Turgot’s pecuniary inability to pursue them. Notwithstanding their short continuance they have left enduring results, although perhaps in more than one instance the counsel, contained in a memoir of Condorcet, was not sufficiently regarded: “Trust only such men who, could they join the Loire to the Yellow River of China, would feel no vanity on that account, but consider that a little zeal and some knowledge was all that had been necessary to accomplish the work.”

The following extract from a letter of d’Alembert to Lagrange will appropriately end the brief notice just given of the works executed by the three geometers, the friends of Turgot:

"It will be told you that I am director of the canals of navigation with a salary of 6,000 francs. This is not true. We, Condorcet, Bossut, and myself have undertaken, through friendship for M. Turgot, to give him our advice in regard to these canals, but we have refused the salary offered to us by the comptroller of the finances."

When Turgot, as minister, wished to carry out the reforms he had conceived as simple citizen; when the comptroller-general found himself assailed by the cupidity of courtiers, the powers of parliament, and the generally conservative spirit of routine, which when great changes were to be made threw doubt upon the wisdom of his plans, Condorcet did not remain a mere spectator of the struggle; he on the contrary, entered into it with the utmost ardor; to a refutation of the work of Necker against the free traffic in grain, he especially devoted his pen, and for the first time he resorts to irony in the assumed *Letter of a laborer of Picardy to M. Necker, prohibitionist*. Voltaire writes thus to our confrère August 7, 1775:

"Ah, what a good thing, what a reasonable thing, and even what a beautiful thing is that *Letter to the prohibitionist*; it must attract all enlightened minds, although there are few such left in Paris, by its good sense and taste." I would not dare to say that good sense and good taste had deserted the capital, but I know that the witty *Letter to the prohibitionist* received little notice, and that Condorcet was obliged to publish a new refutation, more detailed, more methodical, and more complete, of the work of the celebrated and rich banker of Geneva. This second article was modestly entitled, *Reflexions upon the commerce in grain*. The author in it considers successively how these cereals are produced, how the difference sometimes occurring between the harvests of one place and another can be alleviated, and the regulation effected in proportion to wages. He treats also of the mean price and of its influence, and of the equalization of prices; of the effects of unbounded liberty in commerce, and the political advantages of such liberty. Condorcet then examines the prohibitions, both in a general way and in their relations to the rights of property and legislation. Descending, finally, from these abstractions to questions more personal, without mentioning names, he inquires how the authors of the prohibitory measures acquired popularity; he seeks for the origin of the prejudices of the people, and completes his work by some critical reflections, touching certain prohibitory laws, and the obstacles opposed to the good that liberty could produce.

All the aspects of a very difficult problem are frankly considered in a severe and simple style. The work is not a mere pamphlet; it extends to more than two hundred printed pages. Its publication excited general opposition among the numerous partisans of Necker. Writers of the highest rank became from the time of its appearance the implacable enemies of Condorcet. The Academy of Sciences and the French Academy were unpleasantly affected for many years by the consequences of the discords it produced.

With the mind free from prejudice I have asked myself if, under the circumstances, our confrère overstepped the bounds of proper criticism. I suppose no one will contest his right, which he used, conscientiously, to call the work of Necker a mere translation of the celebrated dialogues of the Abbé Galiani into prosy and pompous language, or to refer in this connection to the Greek statue, graceful and beautiful, which an emperor caused to be gilded and so ruined its beauty; but this aside, in going over the work of the former secretary of the Academy I find only one note that could have excited the anger of the warmest partisans of Necker. This note mentions a certain nobleman, designated, however, only by his initials, who had made a bad translation of Tibullus. The friends of Condorcet, uneasy lest the criticism they foresaw would trouble him, endeavored to console him. "Do not fear for my reputation as an author," he said to them; "I have just taken a better cook."

Such in substance was the terrible epigram which disturbed the court and the city, which brought discord even into the bosom of the two Academies, and which endangered the liberty of our confrère. I was disposed to blame Condorcet. It seemed to me that his hostile attitude was assumed on insufficient grounds; that Necker and his adherents had not used in regard to him or Turgot injurious language, but I was mistaken.

Buffon wrote to the celebrated banker "I do not understand this *hospital jargon*—these beggars whom we call economists." Necker accused the same writers "of seeking to deceive others, and of imposing even upon themselves." He described them as imbeciles, and even forgot his dignity so far as to call them ferocious beasts.

It is for the reader to decide whether any one has a right to complain who, after using a dagger upon his adversary, received in return only the prick of a pin.

I have told how Condorcet entered into the administration of the currency; his manner of leaving this important post was not less noble. As soon as Necker became comptroller-general of the finances, our confrère wrote to M. de Maurepas, "I have pronounced my opinion too positively of the works of Necker and of his character to retain any place which depends upon his disposal. I should dislike to be dismissed, but still more to be retained in office, by a man of whom I have spoken as my conscience has forced me to speak of M. Necker. Permit me to place in your hands my resignation."

Condorcet did not so exhaust his ire against contemporary heresies, as to have none left to combat the errors of ancient writers, even the most illustrious.

No one is ignorant that Pascal was occupied a few years before his death with a work intended as a defense of the truth of the Christian religion. This work was not finished. D'Arnaud and Nicole published extracts from it under the title of *Pascal's Thoughts upon Religion and upon other Subjects*. Condorcet, suspecting that this work had been brought

to light in the interests of a party and of certain mystical systems rather than for the reputation of the author, procured, in the beginning of 1776, a complete copy of the manuscripts of Pascal, obtained from them various passages that the saints of Port-Royal, with their Jansenistic consciences, felt obliged to suppress, arranged them methodically, and composed of the whole an octavo volume of 507 pages, copies of which were sent to all the friends of the author, but which was not offered for sale. Frankness compels me to say that the compiler of this new edition of *Thoughts* indulges, as did Arnaud, although in an entirely different spirit, in systematic suppressions. We hasten to add, however, that we have found a eulogy of Pascal by Condorcet, in which the great geometer, the ingenious physicist, the profound thinker, the eloquent writer is fully appreciated, and, with the most noble justice and impartiality, Condorcet adds critical commentaries to several of the *Thoughts* of Pascal. This audacity, in which Voltaire himself had already set him an example, excited great indignation; it was considered a sacrilege. To-day the public would have been more indulgent. The admiration, amounting to veneration, of that time is out of fashion now, and, if I do not deceive myself, the tendency is in the opposite extreme. We no longer think of asking, is such a criticism of a celebrated author irreverent, but is it just. Considered, then, from our present point of view, the remarks of Condorcet may be approved almost without exception.

When the author of the *Thoughts*, pushing misanthropy to its utmost limits, stated that if men were cognizant of all that was said by one of another there would be not four friends in the world; I like to find the commentator protesting against this antisocial decision and blaming Pascal for giving such a strange idea of his friends.

When, in his ardent war against man's love of his own greatness, Pascal insinuates that our actions, even those apparently most disinterested, are always tinged with feelings of self-love, by the hope of publicity and applause which follows in its train; I read with delight, in a note of the commentator, this touching anecdote borrowed from our *Annales Maritimes*, and which contradicts the melancholy declaration of Pascal:

"The vessel which contained the Chevalier de Lordat was wrecked and about to sink in view of the shores of France. The chevalier did not know how to swim; a soldier, an excellent swimmer, offered, if he would spring with him into the sea and would cling to his arm, to save him if possible. After swimming for a long time the strength of the soldier became exhausted. M. de Lordat perceiving this endeavored to encourage him, but the soldier at last declared that they must both perish. 'And if you were alone?' 'Perhaps I might still be able to save myself.' The chevalier let go his arm, and sank to the bottom of the sea."

Voltaire caused the book to be reprinted at his own expense in 1778. Hitherto it had received only a partial publicity. Voltaire, let it be said in his praise, thus became the editor and the commentator of the

young secretary of the Academy of Sciences. This was for Condorcet a very great honor, and, moreover, deserved, on account of the merit of his work. Am I mistaken, however, in supposing that in this action of Voltaire with the sincere homage of the author of the *Dictionnaire philosophique* was mingled some animosity against the Jansenistic writer; that the author of the *Henriade*, of *Méropé*, and of so many admirable smaller poems, saw with a secret joy the infallibility of that man attacked who, placed in the first rank among prose writers, had dared to say, even after the publication of the *Cid* and of *Cinna*, that "all poetry was in fact *only a jargon*"? A certain amount of anger must have influenced the pen of the illustrious poet when, in his appreciation of a work in which the praise is always so frank and the criticism so moderate, he says to Condorcet, "You have shown us the inside of the head of Serapis, and we find in it rats and spider-webs."

In Condorcet's edition of Pascal we find this thought oft repeated: "Speaking according to the natural light of reason, if there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since having no beginning and no end, he can have no connection with us. We are then capable of knowing neither what he is nor *if he is*." The portion of the phrase *nor if he is* is not found in the old editions of the works of the illustrious thinker. Condorcet seemed, therefore, to have been guilty of an inexcusable interpolation of the text. The suspicion that he had committed this grave offense gained weight when, in 1803, M. Renouard, the celebrated bibliographer, declared (these are his own words) that "an obstinate search through the manuscripts of Pascal, preserved in the Royal Library, had failed to discover the three contested words."

The fact stated by M. Renouard must at the time have caused some uncertainty even in the minds of those who had never doubted the perfect rectitude of Condorcet. In this day the testimony of this celebrated librarian is worth nothing, since we know that in 1812 M. Renouard frankly acknowledged that the fourth page of the almost illegible manuscript of the library did in fact contain the thought of Pascal as Condorcet had published it. To cut short all gratuitous supposition in regard to this supposed alteration of the precious manuscript, I will add that the contested words are found in an edition of the *Thoughts* anterior to that of Condorcet, and published by Father Desmolets.

I cannot allow this opportunity to escape of justifying Condorcet from an imputation of the same nature, shocking alike from its violence and its levity. Read, gentlemen, the article upon *Vauvenargues*, in the work of La Harpe, entitled *Philosophy of the XVIIIth century*. The irascible critic first recalls to memory the eloquent prayer which terminates the book of this moralist, and, immediately after accuses Condorcet of having affirmed, with anti-religious views, that the prayer was not by Vauvenargues. It is in the *Commentary upon the works of Voltaire*, says La Harpe, that this *philosophical falsehood* is to be found.

Never, assuredly, was reproach of such gravity expressed in plainer

terms. What must be my reply? The most positive denial of the charge: Condorcet never pretended that the prayer was not by Vauvenargues; he said very clearly, on the contrary, that it was. Can there be possibly such a thing as an anti-philosophical falsehood?

At the end of one of his best eulogies, that of Franklin, our confrère blames very severely those persons who regulate their conduct upon the maxim, old but of low morality, *the end justifies the means*, and denounces indignantly all success obtained by falsehood or perfidy. The actions of Condorcet were in accordance with these noble sentiments; his life was one long contest, but he never had recourse to arms obtained through disloyalty and untruth.

Formerly every nomination to the French Academy was an event, especially when men of the court were to be admitted. Condorcet took part more than once in the debates these occasions produced, but never allowed any consideration for rank to outweigh claims founded on true literary merit. When Saint-Lambert requested him to inform Turgot that the French Academy desired to give him a mark of its esteem and to nominate him in the place of the Duke of Saint Aignan, Condorcet, although he desired greatly that his friend should become a member of the Academy, very plainly advised him to decline the nomination if his acceptance should cause any one making literature a profession to be rejected by the court, which was at that time always consulted before the election of a member. Our confrère thus manifested his true esteem and profound respect for the love of letters.

His counsel was addressed to one worthy to appreciate it. Turgot did even more than his friend had advised. Here is his answer: "Thank for me M. de Saint-Lambert. At this time it would not be suitable for me to draw upon me the eyes of the public for any other purposes than the affairs of my ministry. I think there should be an effort made to elect La Harpe. If this does not succeed, why should not the Academy take the Abbé Barthélemy? And there is M. Chabanon; not to consider his claims to the nomination seems to me to be treating him very severely. He is not, whatever may be said, without talent. They were not always so particular."

Perhaps in our time affairs are conducted as nobly; but even if this is so, I do not regret these citations, for they prove that our fathers were at least as worthy as ourselves.

Condorcet entered into competition in 1782 for the place of Saurin in the French Academy, and carried the nomination by only one vote over Bailly, the other candidate. The contest over the election was very warm, d'Alembert representing one side and Buffon the other. La Harpe gives some idea of the zeal manifested since he tells us that when the issue of the votes was declared d'Alembert cried out before the whole Academy: "I am more pleased to have gained this victory than I would be if I had found the quadrature of the circle."

The disfavor that this nomination drew upon Condorcet (the expression of this feeling is found in most of the writings of the time) is to me inexplicable. Were the literary claims of Bailly to the nomination so indisputably superior to those of Condorcet that the latter could not honestly have received the preference? "Should speculation," d'Alembert maliciously remarks, "in regard to an ancient people, about whom every thing is known except their name and place of abode, overbalance the ingenious, learned, and often elegant descriptions of men of our time?"

In any case, supposing Condorcet was mistaken in his claims to an Academic chair, the illusion was a very natural one. Thus in the unpublished *Correspondence* of Voltaire, I have so often quoted, I read, under the date of 1771: "You should do us the honor of belonging to the Academy. We have need of men who think as you do." Is this said in mere politeness, and not seriously?

I pass over an interval of five years, and on the 26th of February, 1776, find in another letter of the great poet: "Belong to our Academy; your name and your eloquence will have some effect upon the set of hired assassins established in Paris." The same desire is repeated with variations in several letters of the month of March. That of the 16th contains this passage: "I repeat to you that if you do not this time do me the honor of joining us, I shall go and pass the rest of my youth at the Academy of Berlin or that of St. Petersburg." The old man becomes afterward still more pressing: "I wish you would promise me," he writes on the 9th of April, 1776, "for my comfort, that you will take my place in the Academy and aid our assembly with your words, as you have supported it with deeds. Be received by M. d'Alembert, and I will feel greater confidence that all will be well."

Voltaire the sceptic doubts everything except the merit, the attachment, and the gratitude, of our confrère.

We are now at the commencement of 1776. At the close of the year following, the 24th of November, 1777, the author of *Méropé* wrote again to our former secretary: "I shall always be tenderly attached as long as I live to him who forms the glory of the Academy of Sciences, and I hope he will some day do the same for the French Academy. Since the history of literature makes regretful mention of many candidates who entered the Academy only after soliciting long for the honor, I may be permitted to show one man of letters who became an academician only after he had been long solicited."

CONDORCET TESTAMENTARY EXECUTOR OF D'ALEMBERT.—HIS MARRIAGE WITH MADemoiselle DE GROUCHY.

The ordinary, the regular course of things in this world brings some days of mourning, of tears, and of deep sorrow even into the least troubled lives. Condorcet experienced this in 1783. That year, on the 29th of October, death robbed him of his friend, the illustrious geometer,

who under all circumstances had been his guide, his support, his foster father.

The great man, who had succumbed in the plenitude of his mathematical genius, had assumed as a rule of conduct this maxim, which will no doubt by many be considered very puritanical: "The use of the superfluous is wrong, when others are deprived of the necessary." D'Alembert acted through life upon this principle and died, therefore, without fortune. In his latter days he was not only a prey to cruel physical pain, the consequences of a dreadful malady (the stone); he suffered perhaps even more deeply from the impossibility to which he had been reduced by his constant generosity, of suitably rewarding his two faithful servants. A classical incident occurred suddenly to the memory and brought peace to the mind of the celebrated academician.

Eutamidas bequeathed to one of his friends the mission of taking care of his mother, to another of marrying his daughter; a similar testamentary request confided to Condorcet the duty of providing annually for the needs of the two servants. The mission lasted long: Condorcet placed it among the number of his first duties and fulfilled it with religious fidelity. General and Madame O'Connor have continued his example.

The arduous duties devolving upon the secretary of the Academy of Sciences, the obligation of maintaining an active correspondence with the cultivated men of all countries of the civilized world, an irresistible inclination to take part in the debates of which the social and political condition of the country was every day the object, very early decided Condorcet to give up general society. The sacrifice could not have cost him much, for in the eulogy of Courtauvaux he denounces its amusements as dissipation without pleasure, vanity without motive, idleness without repose. Outside of his scientific relations our confrère frequented only a few choice social gatherings where, in contact with the eminent men of the time, the young men learned to discuss the most exciting questions with moderation, delicacy, and modesty. It was in one of these family reunions that Condorcet met, for the first time in 1786, Mademoiselle Sophie de Grouchy, niece on her mother's side of M. M. Fréteau and Dupaty, members of parliament. Like all the rest of the world our confrère admired, first, the rare beauty, the distinguished manners, the brilliant and cultivated mind of this young person. Soon he discovered that these attractions were united to a noble character, a heart most true, an affectionate and benevolent nature. Condorcet then became strongly attached to the young lady, and demanded her in marriage. Our confrère was at this time forty three years of age, and had only a moderate income; but such was the violence of his passion that he made no written agreement, but only a verbal contract with his future parents for the dowry of his wife. This, gentlemen, is very far from the calculating, cold disposition which has been attributed to Condorcet, a character drawn from that of certain of his friends for whom he professed an unlimited admiration, and with whom he was wrongfully supposed to be in sympathy in every way and upon all subjects.

At that time, with very few exceptions, savans, mathematicians especially, were regarded by the world as beings of a separate order of nature. They should, it was thought, like ecclesiastics, be interdicted the concert, the ball, the play. A geometer who married was considered as infringing upon a principle of right. Celibacy seemed the obligatory condition of whoever devoted himself to the sublime theories of analysis. Was this mistake altogether on the side of the public? Were not the geometers themselves instrumental in promoting such views? Listen, gentlemen, and judge for yourselves.

D'Alembert receives indirectly from Berlin the information that Lagrange is about to give his name to one of his young relatives. He is somewhat astonished that a friend with whom he is in correspondence has told him nothing of such intentions. This does not, however, prevent him from mentioning the matter in a bantering way. "I learn," he writes on the 21st of September, 1767, "that you have made what we philosophers call the perilous leap. * * * A great mathematician ought above all things to know how to calculate his own happiness. I do not doubt, then, that, having made this calculation, you find marriage to be the solution." Lagrange responds in this singular manner: "I do not know whether I have calculated well or ill, or rather whether I have calculated at all, * * * or I may be like Leibnitz, who, by force of reflection, never could come to a determination. I must confess to you that I have never had a taste for marriage, * * * but circumstances have decided me * * * to engage one of my relatives * * * to come and take care of me and all that concerns me. If I have not informed you of this it was because it seemed to me a matter of so little importance in itself that it was not worth while to trouble you with it."

The marriage of Condorcet would also have appeared to me a matter of no importance, and not worth mentioning in this biography, if it had been, as d'Alembert suggests, the result of a calculation. On the contrary, without calculation of any kind, but solely in obedience to the inspirations of a feeling heart, Condorcet had the happiness to find a companion worthy of him. The beauty, grace, and wit of Madame de Condorcet formed a sort of miracle. The most decided adversaries of marriage among the savans, especially the mother of the Duke de La Rochefoucauld, the respected Duchess d'Anville, yielded so far as to say to our former secretary, "We pardon you."

CONDORCET AS A POLITICIAN—A MEMBER OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARIS—COMMISSIONER OF THE NATIONAL TREASURY—MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—MEMBER OF THE CONVENTION—HIS VOTE IN THE TRIAL OF LOUIS XVI.

We now enter into a series of considerations and events of a totally different nature from those which have hitherto occupied our attention.

Condorcet is about to take part in the most important events of our revolution.

If it is true, as a celebrated diplomatist has said, that speech often serves to disguise thought, we may add that under certain circumstances, silence is a very unequivocal means of expression. Suppose, for example, that I say nothing of the political life of Condorcet, who would believe that it was not made up of blamable deeds? Heaven forbid that I should voluntarily give reason for a conjecture so contrary to the truth, that I should become the tacit auxiliary of the many scurrilous writers who attacked with a sort of fury the former secretary of this Academy. Every one, in his own cause, has assuredly the right to meet with silent contempt the abuse of adversaries he may consider beneath notice; but this alone is not sufficient for him whose mission it is to defend an honorable citizen, an illustrious brother, the victim of the basest calumnies.

In the society of Turgot our brother became a man of progress not only in social but political economy. Placed near the seat of power for eighteen months, he saw in their most secret details the play of the worm-eaten wheels of the ancient monarchy. Condorcet comprehended their insufficiency, and, although changes were to him personally prejudicial, he never allowed an opportunity to escape of urging their necessity. I do not know whether such noble disinterestedness is common at present; it was not at least in the times of which I speak. Witness, for instance, the naive question addressed to Condorcet by a *Fermier général*, enjoying an income of two or three thousand livres: "Why innovate? Are we not well off?"

No, assuredly; honest men were not common in the days when Turgot, the minister, said to our confrère: "You do very wrong to write to me by the post; you may injure yourself and your friends. Write to me, I pray you, only by special opportunity, or by my couriers."

The "*black cabinet*" opening letters addressed to a minister! Is anything further necessary to show the character of the times? In order to understand the ameliorations France desired, Condorcet did not need to consult the instructions that in 1789 the members of the constituent assembly brought from all parts of the kingdom. His programme of action, perfectly in accord with the best conceived resolutions of the provincial assemblies, was written out in advance. He had found its elements in an earnest and philosophical study of the natural rights, of which a society well organized will not, and cannot, deprive the most humble citizen. The ideas, the wishes, the hopes of our confrère form the chief interest of the *Life of Turgot*, published in 1786. To-day, even, when most of the privileges claimed by Condorcet in the name of reason and humanity have been definitely acquired, publicists may still learn much from reading the work of our confrère. They will see in it, with astonishment perhaps, but also with full conviction, that the vague principle of the greatest good of society has often been a fruitful source of injurious laws, while they will always secure regulations and

prescriptions the necessity and the justice of which must be acknowledged by all, when intent only upon securing to the public, the enjoyment of their natural rights.

I do not know whether, in the present state of opinion, my appreciation of the work of the illustrious philosopher will be generally approved. I may at least assert that every loyal man must experience one sentiment, that of respect, in witnessing with what vigor, since the year 1786, the Marquis Caritat de Condorcet attacked the privileges of the nobility.

Condorcet after much study had written, at the dictation of his conscience, the imperative mandate he was prepared to issue, if circumstances ever gave him the political power. I perceive in this programme many points which have never been decided according to his views, either in fact by our assemblies, or in theory by publicists in general.

Condorcet did not wish two chambers ; but that which he demanded, particularly that which seemed to him the base of a well considered social organization, was a legal and periodical means of revising the constitution, so as to adjust peacefully the disaffection of parties.

The combination of two chambers seemed to him a useless complication, in some cases leading to results evidently contrary to the wish of the majority. He believed "that in the deliberations of a single assembly are found all the elements necessary to secure to legislative enactments all the consideration and the maturity of judgment required for their justice and wisdom." Franklin, a decided partisan of a single chamber, confirmed Condorcet in his views. The eulogy of this great man furnished later to our brother a natural occasion for the development of his opinion, which he seized with avidity. Also, in this same eulogy the learned secretary proclaimed as an inevitable source of evils and disorder any constitution considered unchangable, any constitution which did not provide means for modifying such of its regulations as might cease to be in harmony with the state of society.

With Condorcet as simple citizen or as member of our assemblies, the political man is concentrated into these two ideas,—natural rights, rights imprescriptible which no law can infringe without injustice, and political constitutions containing in themselves a legal means for the reform of abuses. This was his evangel. Whenever his favorite principles are combatted or even only questioned he hastens to their defense. His language then becomes animated, passionate. Read, for example, this passage from a letter he wrote on the 30th of August, 1789, at the time when the constituent assembly had just rejected the proposition made by Mathieu de Montmorency to secure by means of an express proviso the possibility of future improvements in the fundamental compact :

"If our legislators aspire to work for eternity, they ought to bring down a constitution from the skies. To Heaven has alone been accorded

the right to give immutable laws. We have lost the art of working miracles and of making oracles speak. The Pythoness of Delphos and the thunders of Sinai have for ages been reduced to silence. The legislators of to-day are but men, who can give to men—their equals, only laws as fleeting as themselves.”

The first functions of a political order exercised by Condorcet were those of member of the municipality of Paris. In this capacity he was the author of the celebrated address presented by the city to the constituent assembly, to demand the reform of a very important law, the law which had just been passed, and which made the right of citizenship and the other political rights to depend upon the quota of its contributions. The remonstrances of Condorcet and his colleagues were not without effect.

Condorcet was still exercising his municipal functions when he demanded, this time in his own name, that the King should always select his ministers from a list of those qualified, the formation of which should be one of the principal prerogatives of the representative assembly. Would such a process prevent a bad selection? I certainly hesitate to affirm it. I am certain that the list of candidates would be very difficult to make, and would compel laborious investigation.

Condorcet was much more in sympathy with the actual world when he pointed out the dangers attached to the creation of assignats, when he indicated almost infallible means for obviating all the inconveniences of this paper money.

The flight of the King and the circumstances of his return threw discouragement over the minds of the most decided partisans of the monarchical system. La Rochefoucauld, Dupont de Nemours, and others, even held meetings where the means of establishing a republic without too great violence were very seriously discussed. This project was afterwards completely abandoned. Condorcet, an active member of these extra-parliamentary debates, did not consider himself bound by the decisions of the majority to keep secret the opinions he had given; he allowed his speeches to be read at the *Cercle Social*, and this assembly caused them to be printed. From this time dates the unhappy rupture which suddenly, and without hope of restoration, separated him from his best, his oldest friends, and in particular from La Rochefoucauld.

When the questions which the arrest of Varennes inevitably raised reached the national tribune, Condorcet, although he was not a member of the assembly, became in it an object of attacks and of violent personal abuse. The illustrious publicist admitted without hesitation that his opinions might be in part erroneous; but considering the character of those who made such fierce war against him, their disdain excited his surprise. “Was it excessively ridiculous,” he asked himself (I copy here a passage from a manuscript), “that a geometer of forty-eight years, who for nearly a third of a cen-

ture had studied political science, who was the first perhaps to apply mathematical calculation to this science, should be permitted to have a personal opinion upon questions debated in the constituent assembly?" Parliamentary customs were not yet fully developed. Condorcet could not divine that a day would come when, in order to be allowed to speak upon all subjects, it should be imperatively necessary to have made no special study of any.

In 1791, after quitting the municipality of Paris, Condorcet became one of the six commissioners of the national treasury. The memoirs which he published at this period would occupy a prominent place in the eulogy of an author less fruitful and less celebrated. Embarrassed by want of time and abundance of material, I cannot even mention their titles.

Condorcet, having renounced towards the latter months of 1791 the place of commissioner of the treasury, went to Paris as candidate for the legislative assembly. Never was there a candidate more violently opposed, never did the venal press indulge in more libels. It was my duty to investigate and weigh these emanations of party spirit; but I should weary my audience if I attempted to give an analysis of them. I must confess that, amidst the torrent of calumnies and absurd accusations, there was one assertion made in such a clear and categorical manner that in the absence of an equally formal denial, which I could nowhere find, the wrong attributed to our confrère made me really uneasy. Thanks to the respectable M. Cardot, for a long time Condorcet's secretary, all clouds of doubt have disappeared. Condorcet, said his accuser, visited the court nightly, and especially *Monsieur*, brother to the King, even at the time when he was attacking them in his writings, and then follow the names of persons who could testify to these clandestine communications. "Yes! yes!" cried the chief clerk of our secretary, when I consulted him, "I remember that grave imputation, but I remember also that it was proved that the mysterious nocturnal visitor was not Condorcet, but Count d'Orsay, master of the household of *Monsieur*." You see, gentlemen, in times of political animosity, how easily the reputation of the most honest man may be compromised.

Hardly had he been nominated to the legislative assembly when he became one of its secretaries. Later he was raised to its presidency. Timidity, great feebleness of the lungs, the impossibility of preserving his *sang-froid* and presence of mind amidst the noise, agitation, and tumultuous movements of a large concourse kept him away from the tribune, which he mounted only on rare occasions, but whenever the assembly wished to make a serious and impressive address to the French people, the army, to interior factions, or foreign nations, it was always Condorcet who became its official organ.

During his legislative career Condorcet gave especial attention to the organization of public instruction. The fruit of his reflections upon this important subject are recorded in five memoirs, published in the

Bibliothèque de l'homme public, and in the exposition of his ideas on the law which he presented later to the legislative assembly.

Condorcet entirely abandoned the beaten tracks. He has submitted to very careful examination even those institutions and methods which by their universality seemed beyond question. He threw new light upon the subject by considering it from points of view well worthy the attention of the legislator, as an enlightened friend of his country, on account of their novelty and importance. Whatever may be the opinion of the matter, the impartial reader cannot fail to render homage to the clearness of view, the largeness of conception manifested by Condorcet in the various parts of his work.

Here, according to date, should be mentioned a motion of Condorcet I cannot fail to notice. The compass of this motion I am sure has been seriously exaggerated. This assertion has not been made without mature reflection, for it places me in direct opposition to one of the most illustrious men of our time. It requires considerable confidence in the power of truth to dare oppose alone an error, without doubt involuntary, but supported by the prestige of the highest eloquence.

Parliamentary history offers nothing more touching, more curious, than the analysis of the session of the constituent assembly of the 19th of June, 1790. The day when Alexandre Lameth solicited the removal of four chained figures, then to be seen in the Place des Victoires at the feet of the statue of Louis XIV, an obscure deputy of Rouergue, M. Lambel, cried from his seat: "To-day is the tomb of vanity. I demand that henceforth it shall be forbidden any one to take the titles of duke, marquis, count, baron," &c. Charles Lameth supported the proposition of his colleague; he desired that in the future no one should be called noble. Lafayette considered the two demands so evidently necessary, that he thought it superfluous to support them by many remarks. Alex. de Noailles agreed with the latter, but considered the suppression of liveried servants equally urgent. M. de Saint-Fargeau proposed that no one should bear any other name than that of his family, and set the example by immediately signing his own motion,— "Michel Louis le Pelletier." Lastly, Matheu de Montmorency insisted that armorial bearings, heraldry, which were among the most apparent remains of the feudal system, must not be spared, and demanded their immediate abolition. These propositions were presented, discussed, adopted, almost in as short a time as I have taken to give an account of them. In all this our confrère did not take an active part, for the very simple reason that he was not a member of the constituent assembly. If it was a fault to rupture so suddenly all connection between the past and the present, Condorcet, at least, cannot be blamed for it. We have, in fact, since learned, through the memoirs of Lafayette, that upon the question of the abolition of heraldry, our learned philosopher did not agree with Montmorency. It seemed to him, on the contrary, more in accordance with the true principles of

liberty, rather than to suppress armorial bearings, to permit every one, the plebeian, the artisan, the beggar, as well as the noble, to assume them if so inclined.

The law for the abolition of titles of nobility contained nothing specific concerning the penalties attached to its infringement. Such a law, a law without proper sanction, is never observed in any country, and soon falls into disuse. It was, no doubt, to recall to mind its existence, that on the anniversary of the day on which it was passed by the constituent assembly, the 19th of June, 1792, the legislative assembly at Paris caused to be burned a large quantity of brevets or diplomas of dukes, marquises, vidames, &c. The flame was still burning at the foot of the statue of Louis XIV; the last contribution to it was, perhaps, the original title of the Marquis Caritat de Condorcet, when the heirs of this family demanded of the national tribune that the same measure should be extended to all France. The proposition was unanimously adopted.

This proposition has been textually inserted in the *Moniteur*.* It evidently relates only to titles of nobility. A decided partisan for unity in the legislative power, Condorcet hoped to defeat his adversaries (who still meditated the creation of two chambers,) by the destruction of certain parchments which they seemed inclined to consult when composing the personnel of their senate. The artifice was perhaps shabby, puerile. Still it does not authorize an illustrious writer, the honor of our literature, to present it as the immediate cause of the abandonment of certain historical works, because these works had ceased entirely a year before, in 1791. It still less authorizes a serious journal, and of recent date, to tell us that the new Omar, Condorcet, caused to be burned the extensive records of the learned associations, for these records were not burned; the proposition can be read as Condorcet made it, and it refers absolutely only to titles of nobility; for (and this moral argument is in my eyes even stronger than positive facts and dates) there never could have existed a French chamber, whether created by a monarch or by the populace, with elections of any order, which would have sanctioned by a unanimous vote the barbarous, anti-literary, anti-historic, anti-national act, so lightly attributed to the former secretary of the Academy.

It is at about this epoch, and not after the condemnation of Louis XVI, as has erroneously been supposed, that, by the formal order of Catherine and Frederick William, the name of Condorcet was effaced from the list of members composing the academies of St. Petersburg and of Berlin. Notwithstanding all my efforts, I have not been able to discover whether these two acts of disapproval distressed to any great degree our secretary. Not a line, not a single word of his numerous manuscripts and printed works refers to this event. Condorcet imagined perhaps, that as the imperial and royal confirmations added little to the

* See the discourse of Condorcet, of the 19th of June, 1792.

actual value of the literary titles he could regard the withdrawal of these confirmations as a fact little worth his attention.

Condorcet had seen arise in the legislative assembly the personal dissensions which, growing in bitterness, threatened to imbrue the convention in blood, and bring the country to the verge of ruin. He was never willing to take part in these combats when they seemed to center upon individual names. All his tendencies were to moderate rather than to excite these broils. Several times he addressed to the ears of the factions these words, full of wisdom: "Think a little less of yourselves and a little more of the public good."

In times of revolutionary agitations, he who is governed by principle alone is soon considered weak by all parties. Of this Condorcet was an example. Witness on the one hand this passage from Madame Roland: "We may say of the intelligence of Condorcet in relation to his person, it is a fine essence pervading cotton." On the other hand, the electoral corps of Paris, then completely Jacobin, when called upon to nominate its representatives to the convention, withdrew from Condorcet the mandate which had made him a member of the legislative assembly.

A little later in this same convention, for which five departments, in default of that of the Seine, had nominated Condorcet, we will see that it is possible to be both cotton for personal questions and bronze for questions of principle.

Condorcet acted as one of the judges of Louis XVI. I know that, by a sort of tacit consent, it is customary to consider this period of our history as ground too hot to dwell upon with prudence. I think such reserve objectionable. The mystery in which the events of the time are enveloped tends to promote the belief that, to the eternal shame of our national character, not a patriotic feeling, not an act of courage, not an elevated idea, not a sentiment of justice, was brought to light during the long period of the painful drama.

The large portion of the public to whom the *Moniteur* and other official sources of information are interdicted, on account of their high price or their rarity, are acquainted with this part of our annals only through a few barbarous phrases, several of which have been repeated from generation to generation, but are none the less contrary to the truth. The overcaution, which under such circumstances would prevent the historian from attributing to each person his real part of the responsibility, is, in my opinion, inexcusable. I will, therefore, tell you faithfully and without reticence what was Condorcet's conduct during the celebrated trial.

Could the King be tried? His inviolability: was it not absolute according to the terms of the constitution? Liberty: was it possible in a country where positive law ceased to be the rule of judgment? Would it not be violating an eternal axiom, founded upon humanity and upon reason, to prosecute actions which no anterior law had stamped as derelict or criminal? In strict justice, should not the mode

of judgment have been regulated before the time of the offense or crime? Was it to be hoped that a fallen sovereign might find impartial judges among those he once called his subjects? If Louis XVI had not counted upon absolute inviolability, are we sure that he would have accepted the crown?

Behold the series of questions, assuredly very natural, which Condorcet presented to the tribune of the convention, and which he submitted to a severe discussion before the commencement of the trial of Louis XVI. I ought to enumerate them if only to show to what extent they may deceive themselves to whom the history of our revolution is known only by a sort of oral tradition, which represents all the members of the convention as tigers, thirsty for blood, taking no care to cover their fury with even the appearance of right and legality. Condorcet admitted that the King was inviolable, that the constitutional compact justified all the acts of power which were delegated to him. He did not believe that the same rule should be extended to personal derelictions, if they were without necessary connection with the functions of royalty. The most perfect codes, said Condorcet, contain defects. That of Solon, for example, makes no mention of the parricide. The monster guilty of such a crime, should he therefore remain unpunished? No, certainly; to him was applied the penalty of the murderer.

In admitting condemnations by analogy, Condorcet desired at least that the tribunal, constituted with unusual prerogatives, should be based upon dispositions favorable to the accused; he desired the right of recusation more extended; the necessity of a larger majority for the condemnation, &c. According to his views, the judgment of the King should have been confided to a special jury, chosen from the whole country by means of electoral colleges.

The right to punish the King did not seem to our confrère so incontestable as the right to judge him. The idea of a sentence in some sort moral might seem, perhaps, strange; Condorcet saw in it the occasion of showing to Europe, by a legal discussion, that the change of the French constitution had not been the effect of the simple caprice of some individuals.

After having developed the opinions, true, false, or questionable, that have just been presented to you, Condorcet declared, with no less sincerity, that, without violating the first principles of jurisprudence, the convention could not judge the King. A legislative judiciary was in his eyes a veritable chimera. Such an assembly, at once legislator, impeacher, and judge, seemed to him a monstrosity, an example the most dangerous. In all times, he said, and in all countries, the judge has been considered lawfully reprehensible who in advance manifests any opinion of the culpability or the innocence of the accused. In fact, justice cannot be expected from men who, forced to renounce an opinion publicly expressed, must consequently incur at the least the reproach of fickleness. Now, said Condorcet, in a solemn declaration

addressed to the Swiss nation, the convention has already pronounced upon the culpability of the King. Condorcet as to the rest demanded that in the case of condemnation, the right should be reserved of mitigating the punishment. "To pardon the King," said he, "may become an act of prudence ; to conserve the power to do so is an act of wisdom."

It is in the same discourse that I read the words, whose beauty are enhanced by the solemn circumstances of the speaker :

"I believe the punishment by death unjust. * * * The abolition of the death penalty would be one of the most efficacious means of elevating the human species by assisting to destroy the inclination towards ferocity, which has long dishonored it. * * * Punishments which allow correction and repentance, are alone suitable for the regeneration of the race."

The convention, scorning all the scruples Condorcet had raised, constituted itself a sovereign tribunal for the trial of Louis XVI. Our brother did not decline to take part. Was this one of those cases in the body politic, when the minority must blindly submit to the yoke of the majority? The most criminal of usurpations is, without contradiction, that of the judicial power; it wounds both the intelligence and the heart. On such a subject, could the testimony of the conscience be placed in the balance against the material result of the ballot? Let us not always carry severity to the extreme; let us remember that in the open sea, in the midst of the storm, even the most intrepid sailor is sometimes seized with dizziness the timid landsman safe on shore has never experienced. It would certainly have been more Roman to have refused the function of judge; it was more human, according to the ideas of Condorcet, to accept it. Condorcet refused to vote for the punishment of death. Any other penalty he considered could be awarded, and he demanded an appeal to the people.

DISCUSSION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SECOND YEAR.—CONDORCET AN OUTLAW—HIS RETREAT WITH MADAME VERNET—HIS SKETCH OF A HISTORY OF THE PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN MIND.—FLIGHT OF CONDORCET—HIS DEATH.

Of all the writings of Condorcet none exercised so fatal an influence upon his destiny as the plan for the constitution for the second year.

In the midst of the incomparable efforts made by the convention to repulse the armed enemy, to suppress the civil war, to create financial resources, to resupply the arsenals, the political organization of the country was not forgotten; a commission composed of nine of its members was intrusted with the preparation of a new constitution. Condorcet was one of the nine. After several months of assiduous labor and of profound discussion, this commission presented, on the 15th and 16th of February, 1793, the result of its deliberation. The new plan of the constitution consisted of not less than thirteen heads, sub-

divided into a great number of articles. An introduction of a hundred and fifteen pages, written by Condorcet, gave in detail the motives which had decided the commission. The convention accorded to the draught of our colleague the preference over all the others presented for its consideration from other quarters, and concluded that it would without delay be publicly discussed. Violent debates excited each day by personal enmity, the bitterness of party spirit; the wearisome difficulties of the circumstances, and the incessant usurpations of the commune of Paris absorbed all the time of the sessions. Condorcet, caring only for what he considered as directly promoting the triumph, the glory, and the happiness of France, grieved to see the consideration of the constitution day by day deferred. In his impatience he demanded a limit fixed for the delay, at the expiration of which a new convention should be called. At Paris the proposed constitution received very little attention; the departments, on the contrary, received it with favor. It carried and promoted ideas which had become so powerful that it was impolitic not to take them into account. Accordingly after the events of the 31st of May and the 2d of June, the part of the convention in the ascendancy considered it opportune to gratify without delay the wish of the people for the constitution so long promised the country; but it refused to take up again the plan of Condorcet. Five commissioners, appointed by the committee of the public safety, at the head of which was Hérault de Séchelles, made a new plan which the committee amended and accepted in a single session. The convention was not less expeditious. The constitution presented on the 10th of June, 1793, was decreed on the 24th of the same month. The happy shouts of the populace and the thunder of cannon announced in Paris the great event.

The constitution, according to the terms of the decree, was to be sanctioned or rejected by the primary assemblies in the short space of three days from the time of notification, and here occurred an act of Condorcet in order to appreciate the bravery of which it is necessary to go back in thought to that terrible period in our annals which followed the 31st of May.

Sieyès, in private confidence, called the work of Hérault de Séchelles a bad index of subjects. What Sieyès said in secret Condorcet dared to write to his constituents. He did more: in a letter made public, the celebrated savant openly proposed to the people not to sanction the new constitution. His reasons were many and clearly expressed:

"The integrity of the national representation," said Condorcet, "has just been destroyed by the arrest of twenty-seven Girondin members. The discussion could no longer be free. Inquisitorial censure, the pillage of printing offices, the violation of the secrets of letters, must be considered as having presented insurmountable obstacles to the manifestation of the popular sentiment. The new constitution," added Condorcet, "as it speaks of no compensation for the deputies, leads to the supposition

that it is considered desirable to compose the national convention always of rich men or of those with good prospects for the future. The elections, too indirect, are a premium for intrigues and mediocrity. It is an insult to the people to suppose them incapable of making good immediate elections. To compose the executive power of twenty-four persons is to throw affairs into hopeless stagnation. A constitution which does not guarantee civil liberty is radically defective. There is in some minds a tendency toward federalism, toward the rupture of French unity, but the greatest mistake is to have rendered the means of reform illusory."

A critic so quick, so accurate, so just, moreover, could not have been welcome to the authors of the project, but what followed irritated them still more, for self-love is always the weak side of our species, even with those who call themselves statesmen.

"All that is good in the second project of a constitution is copied from the first,—which has only been perverted and corrupted by the attempt to correct and improve." Chabot denounced the letter of Condorcet to the convention in the session of the 8th of July, 1793. The ex-Capuchin called the new constitution of Hérault de Séchelles a *sublime work*. He spoke of the criticism as an *infamous* article which only villains could tolerate, and after the use of these abusive terms, adds: "Condorcet pretends that his constitution is better; that the primary assemblies ought to accept it. I propose, therefore, that he be placed under arrest, and compelled to plead his cause at the bar."

The assembly accordingly decreed without further accusation that the illustrious deputy from Aisne should be arrested and the state seal placed upon his papers.

Condorcet, although generally, but erroneously, considered a Girondist, was not among the number of the twenty-four deputies arrested on the 31st of May. On the 3d of October, 1793, however, his name is found with those of Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Valazé, in the list of the conventionals brought before the revolutionary tribunal, accused of conspiracy against the unity of the republic and condemned to death.

Condorcet, condemned as contumacious, was outlawed; was placed upon the list of exiles and all his possessions were confiscated.

"Honor took refuge in the camp." In this short sentence historians pretend to give an idea of the terrible years 1793 and 1794 of our revolution. But the great epochs of history can be described in so few words, only at the expense of truth. It is true the armies of the republic manifested a devotion, a patience, and a courage really admirable; it is true the soldiers, badly armed, badly clothed, barefooted, strangers to the most simple military evolutions, hardly knowing how to use their guns, overcame by force of patriotism the best troops of Europe, and drove them disorganized beyond the frontiers; yes, from the bosom of the people, whose intelligence had been dwarfed by the aristocratic pride and prejudices of our ancestors, sprang as if by enchantment immortal leaders; yes, when the welfare or honor of the country required

it, the son of an humble goat-herd became the illustrious head of one of our armies, the conqueror of Marshal Wurmser and the peace-maker of the Vendée; yes, the son of a simple tavern-keeper precipitated himself, like an avalanche from the heights of the Albis, and dispersed from under the walls of Zurich the Russian forces of Korsakoff, even at the moment when they considered themselves marching surely to the conquest of France; yes, the son of a plasterer with a few thousand men gave at Heliopolis such proofs of skill and of bravery that the phalanx of Macedonia and the legions of Cæsar can no longer be called the most valiant troops which have trodden the land of Egypt.

I deplore, I denounce, as vehemently as any one, the sanguinary acts which stained the years 1793 and 1794, but I cannot regard our glorious revolution only under this sad aspect. I find, on the contrary, much to admire, even amid the cruel scenes which marked the various stages of its progress. Can we cite, for instance, any country, ancient or modern, in which the victims of both sexes and all parties have given greater proof at the foot of the scaffold of resignation, of force of character, of ready sacrifice of life, than was manifested by our unfortunate compatriots? Nor should be forgotten the intrepid assiduity manifested by many honorable citizens in assisting and sheltering the proscribed.

This last reflection brings us back to Condorcet and the admirable woman who concealed him for more than nine months. It may be supposed that Condorcet did not fully measure all the gravity, all the importance, of the article which he published after the adoption of the constitution of the second year. This mistake, however, must be corrected. That which presented itself to the mind of the deputy of Aisne as a duty, he accomplished with full knowledge of the imminent danger incurred. As indisputable proof of this, I find that the publication of the *Address to the citizens of France upon the new constitution* coincides exactly with the steps taken to secure a place of refuge for the author.

In the political as in the terrestrial atmosphere, there are signs that herald storms, recognized at a glance by the experienced, however indefinite they may appear to others. Condorcet, his brother-in-law Cabanis, their common friend Vic-d'Azir, could not be deceived. After his public manifestation upon the subject of the constitution of the year II (of the Republic), the impeachment of Condorcet was inevitable; the thunder-bolt was launched at his head, and it was necessary for him to seek shelter without delay.

Two pupils of Cabanis and of Vic-d'Azir, who have since become distinguished members of this Academy, MM. Pinel and Boyer, suggested that he should resort for this purpose to No. 21 Servandoni street, where they had resided. This house, ordinarily occupied by students, belonged to the widow of Louis François Vernet, a sculptor and near relative of the great painters of that name. Madam Vernet, as well as her husband, was born in Provence. She had a warm heart, a lively imagination, a character open and frank; her benevolence amounted

to self-sacrifice. These qualities obviated the necessity of circumlocution and long negotiation. "Madam," said MM. Boyer and Pinel, "we wish to save a proscrip." "Is he an honest man; is he virtuous?" "Yes, madam." "In that case, let him come!" "We will tell you his name." "You can tell me that later; lose not a moment; while we speak together, your friend may be arrested."

That same evening Condorcet intrusted his life to a woman whose existence even a few hours before was unknown to him.

Condorcet was not the first fugitive received at No. 21; one other had preceded him there. Madam Vernet never consented, in regard to this unknown, to satisfy the natural curiosity of the family of our confrère. Even in 1830, after nearly thirty-seven years had elapsed, her answers to the pressing questions of Madam O'Connor never passed beyond vague generalities. The refugee, she said, was a great enemy of the revolution; he lacked firmness, was frightened by the least noise in the street, and did not quit his retreat until after the 9th Thermidor. The excellent woman added, with a smile and some sadness, "Since that time I have not seen him; how do you suppose I can recollect his name."

Our confrère had hardly entered his retreat in Servandoni street, when he became a prey to the most cruel mental torture. His income was seized; he could not dispose of a straw belonging to him. For himself, personally, he did not suffer on this account, for Madam Vernet provided for his necessities; with this incomparable woman to assist an unfortunate was so much a matter of duty, that afterward, when the family of the illustrious secretary became opulent, they endeavored in vain, with repeated and constantly-renewed efforts, to induce her to receive some remuneration.

But, safe himself, "Where," thought the illustrious academician, "will she live who is so unfortunate as to bear my name to-day, when every noble woman, and much more every wife of a proscrip, is excluded from the capital?" "Trust to the resources of a devoted wife." Madam Condorcet managed to come into Paris every morning with the purveyors of the markets. "But how will she support herself?" still demanded our confrère in his uneasy solicitude. It seemed, in fact, impossible that a lady delicately reared, accustomed to be served and not to serve others, could gain by her own exertions sufficient maintenance for herself, her young daughter, her sick sister, and an old housekeeper. But the apparently impossible was soon in fact accomplished. The need of some representation of the lineaments of relations and friends is never greater than during a revolution. Madam de Condorcet passed her days in making portraits now in the prisons, and these were the most in demand; now in the silent retreats the charitable secured for the proscribed; in the brilliant drawing-rooms, or in the modest habitations of citizens of all classes who considered themselves threatened by approaching danger. The skill of Madam Condorcet also rendered much less vexatious, much less perilous, the frequent raids of detachments of the revolutionary

army upon her dwelling-place of Auteuil. Upon the demand of the soldiers she reproduced their features with the pencil or the brush. She exercised over them the fascination of her talents, and almost converted them into protectors. As soon as painting ceased to be remunerative, Madam Condorcet, exempt from prejudices, did not hesitate to open a store for lingerie. Later she became the skilful translator of the work of Adam Smith upon the moral sentiments, and published, herself, some letters upon sympathy equally worthy of esteem on account of their delicacy of perception and their elegance of style.

The first steps, the first successes, of Madam Condorcet in the career of personal abnegation and courageous devotion we have just described were a balm to the almost fainting heart of the unhappy proscrip. He felt himself inspired for persevering and laborious work. The force, the clearness of his mind were not less perfect in the retreat guarded by the heroic humanity of Madame Vernet than they were twenty years before, when he was secretary of the Academy of Sciences.

The first work written by Condorcet in his seclusion has never been printed. I will quote the opening lines:

"As I cannot know whether I shall survive the present crisis," writes the illustrious philosopher, "I consider it a duty to my wife, my child, and my friends, who may suffer from the calumnies attached to my memory, to give a simple exposition of my principles and my conduct during the revolution."

Cabanis and Garat were mistaken when they affirmed in the introduction to the *Sketch of the progress of the human mind* that their friend wrote only a few lines of this exposition. The manuscript consists of forty-one closely-written pages, and embraces nearly the whole of the public career of Condorcet. As secretary of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, I should perhaps transcribe the whole of this writing, in which the candor, the good faith, and the sincerity of our confrère are so brilliantly manifested; but the specialties of the Academy of Sciences exclude such details. Nevertheless, as it is the manifest duty not only for all academicians but all citizens to free our national history, our common patrimony, from the miserable stains the action of a limited party have impressed upon her, I will give the opinion of Condorcet in regard to the massacres of September:

"The massacres of the 2d of September," he writes, "a stain upon our revolution, were the work of the folly, the ferocity, of a few men, and not of the people, who endeavored not to see what they were unable to prevent. The factious party, few in number, to whom these deplorable events ought to be attributed, were artful enough to paralyze the public power, to deceive the citizens and the national assembly. They were resisted feebly and without system, because the true condition of affairs was not understood."

Is it not a pleasure, gentlemen, to find the people, the true people of Paris, exonerated from all responsibility in the odious butchery, by a

man whose enlightened understanding, patriotism, and high position are a triple guarantee of truthfulness? In future the following apostrophe of a workman to the commune will not stand alone as an isolated expression of individual opinion :

“ You pretend to be destroying the enemies of the country. I do not call unarmed men such. Lead to the Champ de Mars these unfortunates who, as you say, would rejoice in the failure of the republic. Let us meet them equal in numbers, equal in arms, and there will then be nothing in their death to cause us to blush.”

Condorcet bore his seclusion with great resignation until he heard of the tragical death of the Girondist conventionalists, who had been condemned on the same day as himself. This terrible circumstance concentrated all his thoughts upon the danger incurred by Madame Vernet. He had an interview with his brave protectress, which, although it seems like sacrilege, I give without changing a single word :

“ Your kindnesses, madam, are engraved upon my heart with ineffaceable lines. The more I admire your courage, the more I feel it my duty as an honest man not to impose further upon it. The law is positive : if I am discovered in your dwelling, you will have the same sad end as myself. I am an outlaw ; I cannot remain longer.” “ The convention, monsieur, has the right to put you beyond the amenities of the law, but has not the power to place you beyond those of humanity ; you will remain.”

This admirable answer was immediately followed by the organization in No. 21 Servandoni street of a system of surveillance to prevent the departure of the illustrious refugee, in which most of the members of the household, and particularly the humble porter, had a part. Madame Vernet inspired with her own virtue all those who surrounded her. From this day Condorcet did not make a movement which was not observed.

At this time occurred an incident which shows the superior intelligence of Madame Vernet, and her profound knowledge of the human heart.

One day as he was mounting the staircase leading to the chamber he occupied, Condorcet encountered the citizen Marcos, deputy solicitor to the convention for the department of Mont Blanc. Marcos belonged to the section of the mountaineers ; he had been lodging for several days with Madame Vernet. Under his disguise, Condorcet had not been recognized ; but was it possible to count upon this good fortune for any length of time ? The illustrious proscrip confided his uneasiness to his devoted hostess. “ Wait,” said she, “ I will arrange this matter immediately.” She ascended to the chamber of Marcos, and, without any preamble, addressed these words to him : “ Citizen, Condorcet dwells under the same roof with yourself ; if he is arrested it will be you who has denounced him ; if he perishes it will be you who has caused his head to fall. You are a benevolent man ; I have no need to say more.” This

noble confidence was not betrayed. Marcos entered, even at the peril of his life, into direct relations with Condorcet. It was he who provided him with the romances which our confrère devoured in large numbers. Madam Vernet felt that through the restlessness of the prisoner, an accident might at any time betray him; that her efforts would in the end prove to be in vain if his mind were not more seriously occupied. At her instigation, Madam de Condorcet, and the friends of her husband, entreated him to devote his time to some important composition. Condorcet yielded to their counsel, and commenced his *Sketch of a historic picture of the progress of the human mind*.

While thus, through the judicious influence of Madam Vernet, Condorcet turned his scrutinizing gaze on the social condition of the past and future human race, he succeeded in diverting his thoughts completely from the terrible convulsions in which France was then struggling. In the *Sketch of the progress of the human mind* there is not a line in which the acrimony of the proscribed has taken the place of the cool reason of the philosopher and the noble desire to promote the advance of civilization. "Everything tells us that we are on the eve of one of the great revolutions of the human race. * * * The present indications are that it will be a happy one." Thus Condorcet wrote when he was hopeless of escape from the active pursuit of his implacable persecutors; when the sword of death waited to fall only until the identity of the victim could be assured.

It was in the middle of March, 1794, that Condorcet wrote the last lines of his essay; to carry the work further without the aid of books was not in the power of any human mind. The work did not see the day until 1795, after the death of the author. The public received it with universal approbation. Two translations—one English, one German—made the *Sketch* very popular abroad. The convention obtained three thousand copies, which were distributed through the efforts of the committee of public instruction over the entire republic. In the autograph manuscript the work is called not a *sketch* but a *Programme of a historical picture of the progress of the human mind*. Condorcet indicates its object in the following terms:

"I intend to confine myself to the general traits which characterize the various phases through which the human race must pass, which sometimes manifest its progress, sometimes its decadence, which betray causes and show their effects. * * * It is not the science of man in general that I undertake to treat; I wish to show solely how, through time and his own efforts, he has been able to enrich his mind with new truths, to perfect his intelligence, to extend the use of his faculties, and to employ them to better advantage for his own happiness and the common good."

The work of Condorcet is too well known to require analysis here. How, moreover, can a *programme* be analyzed? I will merely draw the

attention of unprejudiced minds to the curious chapter where, dwelling upon the future progress of the human mind, the author shows the necessity, the justice (these are his expressions) of establishing an entire equality of civil and political rights between the individuals of the two sexes, and proclaims, besides, the indefinite perfectibility of the human race.

The latter philosophical idea was opposed with extreme violence in the beginning of this century by all the popular writers. According to them the doctrine of indefinite perfectibility is not only untrue, but productive of disastrous consequences. The *Journal des Débats* presented it "as favoring too much the projects of the seditious." In the severe criticism made of it in the *Mercur*, in reference to a work of Madam de Staël, Fontanes flattering the passions of Napoleon, even maintained this dream of perfectibility to be a terrible menace to governments. Finally, to weaken (according to the ideas of the day) the rights of this philosophical doctrine to any serious consideration, it was pretended that Voltaire was its first, its true originator. This assertion, however, could not well be sustained. The idea of perfectibility is in fact found in Bacon, in Pascal, in Descartes. Nowhere, however, is it more clearly expressed than in this passage from Bossuet: "After six thousand years of observation the human mind is not yet exhausted; it investigates, it discovers still, and may do so to infinity; idleness alone can limit its knowledge and its inventions."

The merit of Condorcet in regard to this particular subject is confined to having studied by means of data furnished through modern science, and by ingenious association of the facts obtained, the hypothesis of an indefinite perfectibility relative to the duration of the life of man, and his intellectual faculties. But he was, I believe, the first to extend the system so as to induce the hope of the indefinite perfection of the moral faculties. Thus I read in his work "that a day will come when our interests and our passions will have no more influence upon the judgments which control the will than they have now upon scientific opinions." Here, without entirely differing from the author, I would say he makes a prediction it will require a long time to fulfil.

The programme was originally intended to have been followed by a *Tableau complet* (a complete picture) of the progress of the human mind. This picture, composed principally of facts, of historical documents, and of dates, was not finished. The editors of 1804 published some fragments of it; other portions are found in the papers of M. and Mme. O'Connor. Let us hope that filial piety will favor the public with the rest. I dare to hope that it will establish the judgment given by Daunon of the sketch: "I do not know any one, however erudite, either of this or any other nation, who deprived as Condorcet was of books, and with no other guide than his memory, could have composed such a work."

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of the danger incurred by Madam Vernet by his presence in Servandoni street were renewed. He then, to use his own words, resolved to quit a retreat which the unlimited devotion of his tutelary saint had transformed into a paradise.

Condorcet was so well assured of the probable consequence of the step he was about to take, the chances of safety appeared to him so slight, that before leaving the protection of Madam Vernet he recorded his last wishes. This document, which I have in my hands, manifests throughout an elevated mind, a feeling heart, and a beautiful soul. I dare even to say that in no language can there be found anything more thoughtful, more touching, more graceful in form than some passages in this testament, the last effort of our confrère, which he called *The advice of a proscrip to his daughter*. I regret that time does not permit me to make some quotations from it. These lines, so clear, so full of delicate and natural feeling, were written by Condorcet on the very day when he was about to expose himself to great danger. The feeling that a violent death was almost inevitable did not disturb him; his hand traced these terrible expressions, *my death, my approaching death*, with a firmness the stoics of antiquity might have envied. Sensibility, on the contrary, overcame his strength of mind when the illustrious proscrip considered that Madam de Condorcet might be included in the violent death which threatened him. When obliged to mention this terrible contingency, he no longer speaks directly to the point, but endeavors, if we may so say, to veil from his own eyes the horrors of the situation by ambiguous expressions—"If my daughter is destined to lose both parents." This is the most explicit reference he makes to the subject in all the writing; and then, as if even this was too much for him, he immediately reverts to the support of his child, then only five years old. He hopes that his dear Eliza will remain with his benefactress. He foresees and provides for everything. Eliza will call Madame Vernet her second mother; she will learn, under the direction of this excellent friend, besides the usual occupations of woman, how to design, paint, and engrave sufficiently well to gain a living. In case of necessity, she might apply for assistance in England to Lord Stanhope, and Lord Dean; in America, to Bache, grandson of Franklin, and to Jefferson. She should therefore be taught the English language; this, moreover, was the wish of her mother, which was, in itself, enough. At the proper time, Madam Vernet will cause to be read to Mademoiselle Condorcet the instructions of her parents from the original manuscript (this circumstance is especially indicated). Eliza must be kept free from any desire for revenge, must be taught to overcome what would naturally be, under the circumstances, her filial tendencies in this respect. This was a sacrifice demanded of her in the name of her father. The will terminates with these lines: "I say nothing of my feelings toward the generous friend (Madam Vernet) for whom this document is intended;

the dangerous mission Sarret had undertaken ; he left Condorcet and returned to Paris.

What happened then, accounts do not agree. As far as I can learn, Condorcet solicited hospitality only for a single night. Certain difficulties, of which I will not make myself the judge, prevented his friends from granting his request ; nevertheless they arranged that a small garden door opening outward toward the country should not be closed at night, and that Condorcet might present himself there at ten o'clock. When taking leave of the unfortunate proscrip't, they presented him with the Epistles of Horace, a poor resource in truth for one obliged to seek a refuge in the dreary darkness of the quarries of Clamart. These old friends of Condorcet undoubtedly committed the irreparable fault of delegating to others, and not seeing themselves that the arrangement made was carried out. For one or two days afterward Madam Vernet who passed over the country of Fontenay-aux-Roses in every direction, in the hope that her presence there might be useful to the fugitive, remarked a mound of earth and tuft of grass in front of the little gate, proving, alas, only too well, that for a long time it had not turned on its hinges ; during two dreary nights no door had been open for him, except in Servandoni street. There at No. 21 during a whole week front door, shop door, or alley-door would have yielded to the slightest pressure of the fugitive's finger. In the possibility, I can hardly say the hope of a nocturnal return, Madam Vernet did not think of the thieves and assassins who at that time especially haunted Paris. Great, alas, was the difference in conduct of the two families, with whom ties formed in prosperity by favors conferred and ties of misfortune had connected Condorcet.

On the 5th of April, at two o'clock, we see Condorcet leaving with resignation, but not without sadness, the country house where he had hoped to pass twenty-four hours in security. No one will ever know the anguish, the sufferings he endured throughout the 6th. On the 7th we see him, wounded in limb and impelled by hunger, enter an eating-house of Clamart, and ask for an omelette. Unfortunately this man, of almost universal information, did not know even approximately how many eggs a workman eats at a repast. When asked by the shopman how many he desired, he answered a dozen. This unusual number excited surprise, soon suspicion, which spread quickly. The stranger was requested to exhibit his passport ; he had none. Pressed by questions, he called himself a carpenter, but the state of his hands contradicted the assertion. The municipal authorities were informed, had him arrested, and sent him to Bourg-la-Reine. On the route a kind vine-dresser meeting the prisoner, seeing his wounded limb and his limping walk, generously lent him his horse. I ought not to pass over this last mark of sympathy received by our unfortunate confrère.

On the 8th of April (1794), in the morning, when the jailer of Bourg la Reine opened the door of the dungeon in which the unknown prisoner

had been confined, in order that the *gendarmes* might conduct him to Paris, he found only a corpse. Our confrère had escaped the scaffold by a dose of concentrated poison he had for sometime carried in a ring.*

Bochard de Saron, Lavoisier, La Rochefoucauld, Malesherbes, Bailly. Condorcet—such were the losses sustained by the Academy during our sanguinary struggles. The memories of these illustrious men have fared very differently; some have rested in peace in the universal and well-deserved regret; others have periodically been subjected to the storm of political abuse.

If my powers obey my will, I hope soon in this place to speak to you of Bailly. To-day I shall not feel that I have accomplished my sacred task, even after all that has been said, if I do not free the memory of Condorcet from a calumnious imputation. The form of this accusation against our brother does not lessen my inquietude; it imputes to him only weakness, but weakness under some circumstances is a crime.

In giving an account of the deplorable condemnation of Lavoisier, a pen very wise, very respectable, and very respected, wrote some years ago: "Much hope was felt for Lavoisier on account of certain circumstances some of his confrères could adduce in his favor; but terror froze their hearts." With this as foundation, a certain public, cruelly trifling, numbered upon their fingers the academicians who had seats in the convention, and so, without further examination, the name of our former secretary is found fatally implicated in the stupidly ferocious act which deprived France of an excellent citizen, the world of a man of genius. Two dates, two simple dates, will show that when no names are mentioned in connection with so grave an event, when only general terms are used and no one is especially accused, it is not wise, to say the least, to implicate everybody.

Condorcet, it has been said, might have interfered in favor of Lavoisier. When?—at the time of the arrest? Then this is my answer: Lavoisier was arrested in the month of April, 1794. Condorcet was proscribed and hidden with Madam Vernet from the commencement of July, 1793. After the sentence of the revolutionary tribunal? The response is still more decisive: Lavoisier died on the 8th of May, 1794. Condorcet poisoned himself at Bourg la Reine a month before, on the 8th of April. I need not add a word to these figures; they will remain imprinted by ineffaceable lines upon the foreheads of the calumniators of our noble confrère.

PORTRAIT OF CONDORCET.

I have successively presented to your eyes, and in what has appeared to me the true light, the savant, the literateur, the political economist, and the member of two of our national assemblies. It remains for me to

* This poison (we do not know its nature), was prepared by Cabanis. That with which Napoleon attempted to poison himself at Fontainebleau was of the same origin and the same date.

give the portrait of the man of society, to speak of his exterior appearance and of his manners. At one time I was in despair of fulfilling this part of my task, for I had not known personally the secretary of the Academy. I had never even seen him. I knew too well, besides, that books are very unfaithful guides to a knowledge of their writers; that authors can assume sometimes in their works a character totally at variance with their habitual actions. The maxim of Buffon had often been contradicted by fact: "A man's style is the man himself." Happily, unpublished correspondence has in a manner transferred me into the family of Condorcet; has shown him to me surrounded by his relations, his friends, his confrères, his subordinates, and his clients; has made me the witness, the confidant, I had almost said, of all his actions. So I feel reassured. Need I fear to speak with boldness of the most secret thoughts of the illustrious academician, of his private life, of his most sacred feelings, when I have for guides and references Turgot, Voltaire, d'Alembert, Lagrange, and a woman (Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse) celebrated by the extent, the penetration, and the delicacy of her mind?

Condorcet was of large stature; the immense size of his head, his large shoulders, his robust body, contrasted with limbs which had always remained slight on account, our brother thought, of the inactivity which his costume of a girl, and the too great solicitude of his mother, imposed upon him during the first eight years of his life.

Condorcet always retained, with great simplicity, something approaching to awkwardness. To see him only in passing, it would have been said, That is a good man, rather than, That is a wise man. His principal trait, his truly characteristic quality, was an extreme kindness, which was in accordance with the gentle expression of a beautiful face.

Condorcet was considered by his mere acquaintances as cold and insensible. This was a great mistake. He never, perhaps, addressed affectionate expressions to his relatives and friends; but he never lost an opportunity of giving active proof of his attachment. He was afflicted with their afflictions; he suffered from their misfortunes to such a degree that his sleep was often disturbed and his health affected.

How does it happen, then, that our confrère has been so frequently accused of insensibility? Because the emotions of his noble soul were not manifested readily in his countenance. He would listen with an air of the utmost indifference to the story of an unfortunate; but while others were content to manifest their sympathy in vain words, he, without saying anything, would bring succor and consolation of all kinds to relieve the sufferings which had been revealed to him. You know now the true meaning of the words of d'Alembert, "Condorcet is a volcano covered with snow." It is a great mistake to suppose the immortal geometer, by his picturesque simile, meant to indicate violence of character, disguised by coldness.

D'Alembert had seen the volcano in full action in the year 1771. The geometer, the metaphysician, the political economist, the philosopher,

Condorcet, entirely overwhelmed by an affair of the heart, had then become for all his acquaintances an object of pity. He even thought of committing suicide. The manner in which he rejected the palliative for his grief, recommended by his friend and confidant, Turgot, is interesting: "Make some verses; it is a kind of composition you are unaccustomed to, and will distract your mind." "I do not like bad verses; I could not endure my own." "Attack some deep problem of geometry." "When a depraved taste has supplied us with aliment of strong flavor, all other food is displeasing to us. The passions are a degradation of the intellect; outside of the feeling which absorbs me, nothing in the world interests me." As a physician tries all remedies in desperate cases, Turgot then endeavored to excite the fortitude of his friend by examples taken from ancient and modern history and even mythology, but all in vain; time alone could cure, time alone did cure, in fact, the wound which rendered our confrère so unhappy.

If the public were wrong in accusing Condorcet of insensibility, they were equally mistaken in considering him indifferent in matters of art.

When at the French Academy was read for the first time one of those literary productions which formed the glory and the honor of the eighteenth century, Condorcet would remain completely impassive in the midst of the most enthusiastic manifestations of admiration for the author, would hardly seem to have listened, but as soon as opportunity offered he would analyze minutely the work, appreciating its beauties and indicating the weak portions with tact and delicacy as well as admirable judgment, while in support of his remarks he would recite without hesitation long quotations in prose or verse which had become engraved upon his most remarkable memory.

The reserve Condorcet imposed upon himself before strangers gave place in social intercourse to a gayety, simple, refined, and slightly epigrammatic in expression. It was then the immense variety of his knowledge was revealed. He spoke with equal clearness, equal assurance of the rules of geometry, and the regulations of the palace; of philosophy and the genealogy of the court people; of the customs of the republics of antiquity, and the trifles of society.

The secretary of the ancient Academy of Sciences descended into the polemic arena only to defend his friends against the attacks of mediocrity, of hate, and of envy. But his courageous devotion did not lead him to share the unjust prejudices even of those to whom he was most tenderly attached. This kind of independence is so rare I must give some examples of it.

D'Alembert, unconsciously influenced by a feeling of jealousy, did not render full justice to Clairaut. Yet we find Condorcet, in his eulogies of M. de Trudaine and of M. d'Arci, referring almost unnecessarily to the relations of these savans with the author of the beautiful work upon the figure of the earth, while he does not hesitate to call Clairaut a man of genius and to speak of the wonders he accomplished in his youth.

Lagrange and d'Alembert had a very low opinion of the *Lettres d'Euler à une Princesse d'Allemagne*. They had even gone so far as to call them, in allusion to a feeble work written by Newton in his old age, "the commentary upon the apocalypse of Euler"; Condorcet regarding them from another point of view found the letters useful, and not content with praising them, became the editor of them, without the slightest suspicion that this independence of opinion might cause umbrage to his best friends.

The book of Helvétius had irritated Turgot, who expressed himself very emphatically about it, in his correspondence. Upon this point the celebrated intendant of Limoges was impatient of contradiction. Condorcet nevertheless maintained his own opinion of the work with great firmness; he was far from considering it irreproachable, but thought that its dangerous tendencies were exaggerated.

Vanity reigns supreme in all classes of society, particularly, it is said, among men of letters. We can nevertheless affirm that this active and universal stimulant of our actions never affected the beautiful soul of our former confrère. A number of circumstances give evidence of this rare phenomenon. Jealousy is the just punishment of vanity; yet Condorcet never experienced this cruel infirmity. When absorbed by his arduous duties as secretary of the Academy, and by his literary and political engagements, our confrère was obliged to renounce the great and pure pleasure of scientific discoveries; he nevertheless wrote to Euler, to Lagrange, to Lambert (d'Alembert was sick at that time), "Give me news of your work; I am like one of those old gourmands, who, unable longer to digest, still take pleasure in seeing others eat."

Condorcet carried so far his desire to be useful that his door was never closed against any one; he was always accessible; he received every day without impatience, without even appearing to be fatigued, the interminable visits of the legions of troublesome and idle fellows who abound in all great cities, especially Paris. Considering the value of his time, this was kindness carried to heroism. As to Condorcet's disinterestedness, I need not speak of it, as it is well known. "In ethics," he wrote in a letter to Turgot, "I am an enemy to indifference and a friend of indulgence." The phrase would not represent the truth if taken in an absolute sense. Condorcet was very indulgent toward others but very severe with himself. He was very independent in action, so much so as to injure himself seriously by considering certain forms of politeness, current in society, as species of small change too trifling to be taken into account. As an example of his disregard of popular opinion, especially where a principle was concerned, I give the following incident: M. de Maurepas was very much irritated by a letter directed against Necker, and in which occurred some passages which could be injurious to the public credit. It was wrongfully attributed to Condorcet. The Duke de Nivernais endeavored to persuade his friend and confrère to write to the minister, but he resisted with a firmness which, at the time,

seemed inexplicable. To-day I find the explanation in an unpublished letter addressed to Turgot. The secretary of the Academy would not pay even the semblance of respect to a man whom he was far from respecting.

Condorcet acknowledged his faults and the errors he committed with a frankness of which the following brief incident is an example: "Do you know," said some one to him, "the circumstances which caused the rupture between Jean Jacques and Diderot?" "No," he answered, "I only know that Diderot is an excellent man, and whoever involved him in dissension was wrong!" "But it was yourself?" "Then I was wrong!"

In the edition of Pascal's thoughts, by the author of *Méropé*, I find this note of Condorcet: "The expression, 'honest men,' signified originally men of probity; in the time of Pascal, it indicated men of good society; now it is applied to men of title or of money." "No," said Voltaire, addressing himself to the annotator, "the honest men are those at whose head you stand."

To justify this exclamation, since it seemed to me the expression of truth, has been my object in writing these pages. I shall be happy if the portrait I have traced of the illustrious perpetual secretary of the ancient Academy of Sciences has dissipated the very cruel prejudices, neutralized the effects of the more detestable calumnies which have injured his memory; if, with those who enjoyed the intimacy of Condorcet, I have made you see in him a man who has honored science by his labors, France by his high qualities, humanity by his virtues.