

## CHAPTER I

### FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS

TUCKER begins his analysis from the psychologist's point of view. Conceiving the possibility of a science of commerce, and accurately divining the psychological nature of that science, he opens his great work <sup>1</sup> with a "preliminary discourse setting forth the natural disposition or instinctive inclination of mankind towards commerce."

He defines commerce thus:

"Commerce, I mean, in the large and extensive signification of that word; commerce as it implies a general system for the useful employment of our time; as it exercises the particular genius and abilities of mankind in some way or other, either of body or mind in mental or corporeal labor."<sup>2</sup>

This definition obviously widens the term commerce so that it includes the whole range of economic activity, and one who is reading Tucker must keep this sense of the word in mind. A science of commerce so defined is a science of economics.

That Tucker had a clear conviction that commerce was reducible to a science is evidenced by many references in his works. For examples, in 1749 he wrote:

<sup>1</sup>The full synopsis of this great work (partially executed and partially only thus outlined) is printed in the Appendix of this monograph. The order of topical arrangement indicated by this outline of Tucker, has been substantially followed in the following pages, that the impression received in reading them may be as nearly as possible that which Tucker planned.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventeen Sermons*, pp. 138-139.

“Men of a liberal and learned education have disadvantageous ideas of the study of commerce . . . it has been represented as a dry, unentertaining subject, dark and crabbed, perplexed with endless difficulties, not reducible to any fixed and certain principles. But upon examination it will perhaps appear that this representation is very false and injurious. . . . The principles of trade, therefore, being so clear and certain in themselves etc.”<sup>1</sup>

and in 1755 he opens his *Elements* with :

“The principles laid down in the ensuing treatise are for the most part general and universal, viz., such as would suit (with very little alteration) any kingdom, state, or climate, whatever and are therefore called *The Elements of Commerce*.”<sup>2</sup>

Preliminary to his attempt to state and to make application of what he conceives to be the principles of the science, he analyzes human nature, concluding :

“Therefore the general and constituent principles of human nature may be summed up: Man hath the appetites of an animal, the temper and affections of a social being, and the understanding of a rational agent.”<sup>3</sup>

The analysis proceeds to unfold the relations of this animal appetite, this social benevolence, and this regulative reason. A running abstract will give a clearer notion of the trend and connections of the thought than if the excerpts be given piecemeal and then commented upon.

Tucker observes that as animals, men are more deficient by nature than any other tribe of beings, for they need clothing and shelter. Other animals are quickly able to supply all of their wants, but never progress, *e. g.*,

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Trade*, pp. viii and ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements, Advertisement*.

<sup>3</sup> *Elements*, p. 3.

“the first nest is as admirable as the last.” Few lower animals “discover any disposition to divide the labor of the community into different branches or assign distinct parts to the respective individuals . . . . Wheresoever any tribe of animals distributes the labor of the community into different parts (as is reported to be the case among beavers, ants and bees, it hath always been observed that those make some advances superior to mere animal life.”<sup>1</sup>

“But the social instincts are for the most part, the prerogative of man . . . . mankind therefore being thus under the influence of social and benevolent instincts as naturally seek society in order to gratify these social instincts, as they require food for appeasing the appetite of hunger.” In society thus formed there arise artificial needs “to be called social because their first rise and subsequent increase must be ascribed to society. And as our present secular happiness appears to arise from enjoyment of superior wealth, power, honor, pleasure or preferment, self-love, the great mover of created beings, determines each individual to aspire after these social goods and to use the most probable means of obtaining them. Thus, therefore, the passion of self-love operates, with much greater force when excited by such a long train of objects than it possibly could do were men strangers to the artificial wants, the refinements and decorations of social life. And yet were this passion to proceed without direction or control, it would in a great measure defeat its own ends. For self-love is narrow and confined in its views, and admits no sharers or competitors, wherever it can exclude them . . . . and tho’ in fact all such mutual exclusions must end in mutual poverty, so that even self-interest is a loser, in the end, by these pernicious schemes, yet the mass of mankind ever did and ever will proceed in this way as far as they have power. They will always regard the present moment and be blind to future consequences . . . . Indeed I grant that the social instinct of benevolence is some check upon this selfish monopolizing

<sup>1</sup> *Elements*, p. 4.

principle; but it is so very feeble that it would be quite ineffectual to prevent the mischief arising from inordinate self-love, were there no stronger curb to rein it in. For the love of self is implanted in human kind much more strongly than the love of benevolence, according to the English proverb: 'Self knows no fellow.' Therefore reason and reflection must be called in to the aid of the social and benevolent principles. But what is the office of reason? Not surely, to extinguish self-love. That is impossible. And it might be questioned whether it would be right even to diminish it, for all the arts and sciences, and the very being of government and commerce, depend upon the right exertion of this vigorous and active principle. And were it once restrained or weakened, human nature would make but feeble efforts towards anything great or good. Nay, in such a case, the social temper itself would want a spur, and all the benevolent affections being destitute of their proper incitement would be very faint and languid in their operations. Consequently the main point to be aimed at is neither to extinguish nor to enfeeble self-love, but to give it such a direction that it may promote the public interest in pursuance of its own; and then, the very spirit of monopoly will operate for the good of the whole. And if this is the proper business of reason, considered in the abstract, the reason or public wisdom of a state or community is particularly called upon to pursue such a law. This politic direction of the pursuits of various individuals towards one common end, the study of philosophies and the aim of every wise legislature, will be found to be nothing more than a strict and scrupulous observance of Christian morality. . . . Where the auxiliary motives of reason are called in to the aid of social love or diffusive benevolence, the latter become in a good degree a counter agent to inordinate self-love. So that the circulation of commerce may be conceived to proceed from the impulse of two distinct principles of action in society, analogous to the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the planetary system." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Elements*, pp. 5-8.

Four of the topics suggested by this extended abstract deserve particular notice. They are, 1st, human wants; 2d, self-interest; 3d, the relation of economics to ethics; and 4th, the theory of national prosperity. Tucker develops these four topics somewhat fully, and an attempt is here made to present his complete thought upon the subjects by correlating the partial analyses of them scattered through his various works.

### I. WANTS

With an insight remarkably prophetic of the economic analysis accepted at the present day, Tucker opens his great work with a study of the wants of man. He sees that man is the important subject for economic analysis. He, therefore, seeks in man's nature for the explanation of the world of commerce which he desires to understand. And, first of all, he sees that there are wants, and that stimulated by these wants men seek to satisfy them.

Considered merely as an animal, "man has animal wants, and is incited to provide for them much the same as animals."<sup>1</sup> But as a social being, man develops other than crude animal wants, and these are to be called artificial wants. This distinction is clearly stated in the opening of his chapter on the politics for the extension of commerce. After defining commerce, he continues:

"And this employment is derived either from the natural or the artificial wants of mankind. The natural wants, as hath been observed, are such as belong to man in common with other animals. But the artificial wants are peculiar to him as a member of civil society. Though, indeed, in another sense, these very artificial wants may be styled natural, because they arise from the peculiar nature of man as distinguished from other

<sup>1</sup>*Elements*, p. 3.

creatures. But this being a less intelligible way of speaking, it would be better to keep to the former division into natural and artificial. . . . If a man is poor, he can supply himself only with necessities;<sup>1</sup> . . . if rich, he can get useful and convenient things.”<sup>2</sup>

Natural wants, then, appear to be demands for the most meagre necessities of individual physical life. Any social-born want is artificial. Thus even the Indians of America have developed some artificial wants:

“True, they have not the *same* artificial wants, . . . but they do want beads, etc., . . . and ammunition. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Tucker believes that the artificial wants may stimulate either social development or social degeneracy. Perhaps his most sweeping generalization in dealing with the subject of want is:

“The support and extension of commerce must result from the multiplication of the artificial needs of man.”<sup>4</sup> This same thought is in the query: “Whether the artificial wants of mankind, properly circumstanced and under due regulation, are not the great master-spring of the machine of commerce?”<sup>5</sup>

But Tucker sees the possible evil, as well as the potential good, of artificial wants. This is shown by his query:

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he suggests the present time honored classification in a phrase: “Every necessary, every comfort and elegance.” See *Four Tracts*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements*, p. 41. For the same thought well stated, see *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 10, *note*.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay on Trade, 3rd Ed.*, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> *Elements*, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 10.

“When these (artificial) wants degenerate into vice, intemperance, and extravagance, whether they do not then become a great obstacle to the constant and regular motion of the machine, and indeed have a necessary tendency to stop it at last?”<sup>1</sup>

It is such insight that leads him to criticise Mandeville's famous pamphlet:

“What an absurdity, therefore, was it, in the author of ‘The Fable of the Bees,’ to say that private vices are public benefits. It is virtue alone that can make a nation flourish, and vice of every kind is either immediately, or in its consequences, injurious to commerce.”<sup>2</sup>

An artificial want which Tucker mildly criticises, and to which he often refers, is the desire for foreign wares—the desire that led French women to wear English silks and jewelry, and that induced the English to use French wines. He explains this thirst for foreign goods as due to a craving for distinction. Of this desire for distinction he writes:

“The passion of wishing to be distinguished is, indeed, universally implanted in human nature, and may be made subservient to both good and bad purposes.”<sup>3</sup>

But the two wants which Tucker emphasizes as degenerating, and which he treats at length, are desires (a) for luxury and (b) for spirituous liquors.

#### a. LUXURY

To the discussion of luxury he devotes an entire sermon, one of the two which he called his “commercial sermons.” In it he defines luxury, traces its fatal effect upon public

<sup>1</sup> *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Trade, 3rd Ed.*, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Cui Bono*, p. 43.

welfare, and gives test rules to determine the proper expenditure of private incomes. In opening the discourse, he confines his thought to the use or abuse of the world so far as it affects

“the more costly ornaments of life and those embellishments which belong to the higher ranks of society. For if it can be proved that luxury retards even grandeur and magnificence, then surely it will be quite superfluous to descend to inferior matters.”<sup>1</sup>

He defines the form of luxury with which he deals:

“The first characteristic of luxury is when expense exceeds ability, that is, when men figure away in the great world for a time and then either sink into poverty or obscurity, or else take bad courses to support their extravagance. The second is when persons live after such a manner as, though it may last for their own time, will, nevertheless, prevent them from making a provision, or at least an adequate provision, for the succeeding generation. This, indeed, is little more than a removal of the former evil to a more distant period.”<sup>2</sup>

He expressly omits from the discussion the forms of luxury that connote “indulgence of the carnal appetites,” and undertakes to prove that

“Luxury, even in high life, and even in the most favorable view of it, is not that useful thing to society which moralists themselves have incautiously granted, and which advocates for vice have pretended to demonstrate.”<sup>3</sup>

He assumes the case of a capital city whose inhabitants live luxuriously, as he defines the term, and pictures how,

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.



from a transient splendor, the city inevitably sinks to ruins.  
Beyond the third generation

“by a natural transition, the few wretched descendants of the first prodigals would be glad to inhabit some corner of the mouldering palaces of their ancestors, fitted up as huts or hovels for their reception.”<sup>1</sup>

The only remedy is

“to substitute a more virtuous, frugal and industrious set of men<sup>2</sup> . . . if we are to imagine that the inhabitants of this metropolis did begin from the lowest stages, then we must allow that the necessaries of life must have been the first objects of their care. . . . After these had been sufficiently provided for, and a growing fund of wealth established, mankind would naturally expand their ideas and extend their thought to the comforts and conveniences of their respective condition . . . . Very likely the first generation would here terminate their views; . . . but the second generation, still persevering in the same plan of good economy, would be enabled, without detriment to their circumstances, to advance higher, so that the works of genius would begin to appear. . . . From such elegancies and refinements the gradation is easy and natural to that which is grand and magnificent, and thus the affairs might be carried on . . . throughout an almost endless progression and variety.”<sup>3</sup>

These latter men, Tucker says, are the real “patrons of the arts.” He concludes the discussion by noting (1) the fundamental harmony of ethics and economics, and (2) that

“Temperance and excess are relative terms whose significa-

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

tion must be ascertained by the circumstances of the case, . . . the respective constitution, circumstances, age and condition, of this or that particular individual.”<sup>1</sup>

This thought of the temperate man leads him to frame rules for wise expenditure:

“ Thus, for example, he who uses this world properly . . . is he who adjusts his enjoyment to the following standard, viz.: 1st, when his expenses are brought within his income; 2dly, when he makes a decent and adequate provision for his family and dependents; 3dly, when he lays by for contingencies; 4thly, when he obliges himself to be a good economist, in order the better to be able to provide for the necessities of the poor; 5thly, when he indulges himself in no gratification which may injure either the health of his body or the faculties of his mind; 6thly, when in all his enjoyments he has regard to the influence he may have over others, so as to set them no bad or dangerous example.”

“ Now whosoever will limit his . . . expenses by these regulations, he is not a luxurious, but a temperate man. . . . Nay, were he to do less, were he to deny himself such gratifications as can be enjoyed, compatibly with these rules, he would not fill the station nor live up to the rank and character allotted for him. In short, he would be the covetous man, . . . injurious to society by defect as the other was by excess.”<sup>2</sup>

#### b. SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS

The other artificial want which Tucker treats at some length, is the desire for spirituous liquors.<sup>3</sup> Instead of giving a full and pathetic description of the miseries and

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>3</sup> See *An Impartial Inquiry into . . . Use of . . . Spiritous Liquors, etc.*, a 33 page pamphlet, written in 1751, devoted to this subject and from which the following digest and quotations are taken.

destructive consequences occasioned by spirituous liquors, he prefers to impartially set forth "such facts as seem necessary to be insisted upon." He answers a number of objections to the movement against the use of spirituous liquors already begun by the chief magistrate in London. He argues that revenue deficiency resulting from lessened liquor consumption can be made up, beneficially,<sup>1</sup> in other ways; that funds spent for liquor may be turned into better trade channels, and that foreign liquors can be made so expensive by high duties that little will be used. To the contention that the legislature has no right to ruin the business of the British distillery, he queries:

"Is it reasonable that a very great part of the common people of Great Britain should be permitted, . . . encouraged in practicing a vice enfeebling and enervating, shortening lives and making victims public burdens, or that a few suffer inconveniences?"<sup>2</sup>

He classifies consumers of spirituous liquors, and discusses the probable effect of his proposed liquor legislation upon each class. The first class includes those "obstinately addicted to" the use of liquors. If the price is made higher, "they can get less, and thus prolong their lives and hinder the corruption of their example." The second class includes those who have "no unconquerable attachment, but who cannot withstand temptation when in their way." These people can be saved, because "there is a difference between being tempted and seeking temptation." The third class includes "the young children . . . who can be entirely reclaimed."

<sup>1</sup> It was a hobby of Tucker's, as will be shown later, that taxes could be laid so as to stimulate industry.

<sup>2</sup> *Spirit. Liq.*, pp. 8 and 9.

In the appendix to this pamphlet on liquors, Tucker estimates the loss to Great Britain through the use of gin and of spirituous liquors. He estimates that there are 400,000 drinkers of both sexes. They consume less of bread, meat, groceries, furniture, and apparel, do less work, die prematurely, commit thefts and robberies, are sick oftener and longer, and increase the poor rates, all of which loss side of the account sums, annually, £5,214,285 14s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the annual profit at 2d. per day per drinker on the English spirits they drink sums £1,216,666 13s. 4d. yearly. This leaves a net loss of £3,997,619 11 $\frac{1}{7}$ d. Tucker then criticises his own estimate, declaring that, if anything, it underestimates the loss.

The pamphlet closes with an argument that an idle drinker is a "double loss to the community," being weaker both as producer and as consumer, whereas a sober worker is a "double advantage" to his community.

## II. SELF-INTEREST

The second of the topics suggested by the lengthy quotation, and deserving of further treatment, is self-interest. In his discussion of this subject, Tucker again places himself abreast of modern economic thought. He discovers in his searching analysis of human nature that self-interest is the ruling economic motive. He, therefore, makes it basic in his system of commerce. In the lengthy quotation from the *Elements*, it is made certain that in 1755 he saw clearly that in economic life self-interest is the supreme motive. To this analysis he adhered consistently in all of his later works.

He applied his knowledge of the power of self-interest

<sup>1</sup>This affectation of mathematical nicety is possibly pardonable in a writer of the eighteenth century, but similar perfection pretense is not unknown to-day.

again and again. It was the basis for his prophecy that trade relations would be resumed after the war with the American colonies, even though the colonies were granted independence. The ample fulfillment of this prophecy illustrates the practical insight which Tucker developed, through intelligent deductions, from this fundamental motive. As illustrations of Tucker's applications of self-interest, these American trade prophecies will serve well:

"Americans will buy our goods when it is to their interest and they are able to, notwithstanding the bitterest antipathy, . . . and I defy any man to prove that they ever did buy our goods contrary to their own interest."<sup>1</sup> "It is impossible to compel distant settlements to trade with a parent state, to any great degree, beyond what their own interest would prompt them to; and self-interest needs no compulsion."<sup>2</sup> "Let it be observed as the universal rule with merchants and traders of all countries, religions and languages, that self-interest needs no reconciliation. For trade is carried on not for the sake of friendship, but of interest."<sup>3</sup>

Other applications of this same self-interest principle are made in his treatment of population, of trade in general, of manufactures, and of taxation. In short, recognition of this powerful motive to economic activity is so frequent in his works, that it is clearly established that he made self-interest, in vital reasoning, as well as in early formal analysis, a central principle in his system of economic thought.

He recognized the self-seeking motive to be too powerful to be overcome, and that therefore sane systems of legislation should so appeal to this motive that its splendid incen-

<sup>1</sup> *Cui Bono*, p. 75. A similar idea in *Letters to Shelburne*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise on Gov't*, p. 253. A similar application to trade with Ireland is made in *Union or Separation*, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Series of Answers*, p. 28.

tives should direct individual energies towards promotion of the public welfare. This idea he applies in his system of taxation.

A comparison of the *Appendix* to the *Essay on Trade* [edition of 1753], and the *Elements*, written in 1755, seems to show that Tucker had, within the two years between these writings, developed his idea that self-interest can be made conducive to public good. In the *Appendix*, he refers to "self-interest, the bane of all public good,"<sup>1</sup> "that watchful dragon, self-interest,"<sup>2</sup> and "the baleful spirit of self-interest,"<sup>3</sup> consistently using condemnatory adjective and metaphor. But while this *seems* to indicate that he had not yet reached the advanced position that this primal motive may be appealed to for good as well as for ill, it does not, as can readily be shown. In the *Appendix*, Tucker is attacking the privileges of the chartered companies, and when he uses "dragon" and "baleful" he is but characterizing the evils that result when self-interest is unbridled. That he had noted even before 1753 the possibility of good through self-interest, is evident from a paragraph he wrote in 1752:

"The great view of the divinely-inspired legislator, Moses, seems to have been to turn this principle of self-love into such a channel that it should always operate for the public good. And, indeed, this ought to be the sole aim of every government, if either good morals or national prosperity are expected."<sup>4</sup>

All of the many references made to self-interest in his works published after the *Elements*, recognize it as a powerful motive which may be appealed to for good or for ill. There are many such passages as:

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Trade, 3rd Ed.*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> *2nd Letter on Naturalization, Note*, p. 37.

“whether they make the passion of self-love, that ruling principle of human nature, subservient to the public good or detrimental,”<sup>1</sup> etc.

In logical consistency with the above thought, it is notable that Tucker, at no time, advocated the complete ultimate harmony of public and private interests. Here, again, he agrees with the modern thought, and is opposed to the Manchester school of economists. He did not trust individual self-interest, free-reined, to labor always for the public good. On the contrary, he pointed out cases in which public and private interest are at variance, as, for example:

“The general interest of trade and the interest of particular traders are very distinct things; nay, are often quite opposite. . . . General interests of trade are interests of industry, and therefore of peace. . . . Many dealers in exports and imports encourage war and oppose peace. . . . Jobbers and contractors for our fleets and armies, clerks, paymasters, &c., are . . . vultures who fatten on human gore. They keep up the American warwhoop and object to peace measures so long as personal gain may come to them.”<sup>2</sup>

### III. RELATION OF ECONOMICS TO ETHICS

The third topic, worthy of somewhat fuller treatment than is given to it in the long extract from the *Elements* at the opening of this chapter, is the relation of economics to ethics. This subject is fully developed by Tucker, and the conclusion he reaches becomes one of his working principles, frequently applied by him in the consideration of varied problems. His position is an *a priori* one. It is the position of

<sup>1</sup> *Instruct. for Trav.*, p. 10. For similar references see *ibid.*, pp. 20 and 32; *Cui Bono*, p. 60; *Humble Address, etc.*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Four Tracts*, pp. 90-91.

the philosopher enamoured of his ultimate unity. It is, none the less, the position of the present day economist, if that individual see fit to deal with the subject at all. A clergyman, Tucker states his *a priori* position in the churchman's language. Its substance is that there cannot be fundamental disharmony between good moral and wise industrial living. He frequently attributes the harmony between rightly understood moral and commercial relations to a design of the world Creator:

“ Providence never designed us to be beasts of prey, to bite and devour one another ; but, on the contrary, that whatever is a social duty in a moral sense, was likewise intended by our wise and gracious Creator to be a real, lasting and national interest in a commercial.”<sup>1</sup>

That this conception was one of Tucker's working principles is apparent from a number of applications of it which he makes. When arguing the unwisdom of war between nations, and the opposing the current thought that a nation could rise only as it crushed down its rivals, he said that he was

“ firmly persuaded that, in His plan of government, the political interests of nations cannot be repugnant to those moral duties of humanity and love which He has so universally prescribed.”<sup>2</sup>

In closing his discussion of luxury, he again stated and applied this principle:

“ It clearly appears . . . that there can be no real and last-

<sup>1</sup> *Cui Bono*, p. 46. Similar thought in *Seventeen Sermons*, pp. 138-39; *Elements*, p. 8; and *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Four Tracts*, p. 63.



ing opposition between the laws of sound morality and those of sound policy, whatever crude opinions may be entertained to the contrary. For even in these cases where it was heretofore usually imagined that strict morality had the disadvantage, it is now evident that the fact itself is far otherwise, and all the claims which luxury, in the most favorable view of it, can possibly make, amount to no more than that, for a short time, it doth promote a greater demand for the ornamental parts of furniture, dress and equipage than, in prudence, there ought to have been. A mighty advantage! . . . . Indeed, there is something extravagant, if not impious, in the supposition that morality and policy, when rightly defined and properly understood, should be at variance with each other. For what an idea must this give us of the Divine Being? What a strange constitution of the world would that have been had it been necessary that our duty and our interest should always clash! . . . . Nor was He that shortsighted, or improvident, or malicious Being as [sic] to make that to be our duty which is not upon the whole, even as to the affairs of this world, our interest likewise.”<sup>1</sup>

A further application of this same principle occurs in his modern-toned discussion of the relative efficiency of slave and of free labor. From an implied premise that ethics clearly condemns slavery, Tucker argues that, according to the fundamental harmony-principle, slave labor should be uneconomic, and asserts that it is so in fact. This is in his open letter to Edmund Burke:

“For my part, I am thoroughly convinced that the laws of commerce, when rightly understood, do perfectly coincide with the laws of morality: <sup>2</sup> both originating from the same Being,

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, pp. 159 to 161.

<sup>2</sup> This principle is frequently stated in his works. See *Elements*, pp. 40, 42 and 81; *Four Tracts*, p. 20; *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot.*, Part II, p. 10.

whose mercies are over all His works. Nay, I think it is demonstrable that domestic or predial slavery would be found, on a fair calculation, to be the most onerous and expensive mode of cultivating land and of raising produce that could be devised, and I defy you, with all your learning and acuteness, to produce a single instance from history, either ancient or modern, of a country, being well cultivated, and at the same time abounding in manufactures, where this species of slavery . . . . is preferred to the method of hiring free persons and paying them wages.”<sup>1</sup>

From the nature of his chosen profession, and from his firm belief in the final harmony of ethical and economic interests, it is to be expected that there should be not infrequent ethical comments in his economic works, just as, owing to his belief in the wholesomeness of thought upon economic life, there is a distinctly commercial flavor to some of his sermons. One of these ethico-economic passages is as applicable to this day as to the mid-eighteenth century:

“For crimes against the public are attended with such consequences as spread the contagion of vice much wider, and are more detrimental to virtue and to good morals, than the like crimes . . . . against private persons. And yet, how differently do most people think of these matters! How light do they make of any injury done to the public! A contraband trade is nothing; nay, it is well if it is not esteemed meritorious. . . . And as to custom house oaths, dealings with the government or with public bodies, and all the other methods whereby society is injured and defrauded, who is there that scruples the repetition of these over and over? . . . . Such facts are too notorious to be denied and too bad to be palliated.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letter to Burke*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, p. 183.

In summary, Tucker thought that, rightly understood, ethics and economics were closely related, and necessarily in harmony. To him, preaching morality was at the same time inculcating guiding principles for wisest conduct in the commercial world; demonstrating a principle of trade was at the same time pointing out a path to higher levels of national ethical life. The dean and the economist were happily made one by the formula: Sound morality coincides with commercial wisdom.

#### IV. THEORY OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY

The fourth topic suggested by the opening quotation from the *Elements*, is the theory of the wealth of nations.

Two ideas are the essentials of Tucker's theory of national prosperity: (1) Industry, only, will make a nation rich. (2) State action can, and should, stimulate such industry. Both of the ideas are often expressed, and are almost always implied, in his writings.

Typical expressions of the first idea are:

"This mutual circulation of labor and industry is the grand fundamental truth in politics and commerce, which can never be too much inculcated."<sup>1</sup> "Almost the whole body of the people of Great Britain may be considered either, as customers to, or the manufacturers for, each other—a very happy circumstance this, on which the wealth and prosperity of a nation greatly depends."<sup>2</sup> "Judge also whether a rich country can ever lose its trade while it retains its industry and consequently how absurd must every project be for securing or increasing this trade, which doth not tend to secure or increase the diligence and frugality of the people."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cui Bono*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Instruct. for Trav.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Four Tracts*, p. 41.

The second essential of Tucker's prosperity theory is that government action may stimulate this wealth-getting industry. He has very great faith in the efficacy of legislative enactment and of executive enforcement of law. This faith is explicitly avowed in connection with one of his presentations of the idea that nations need not necessarily die as persons must. He argues that not only may "the public body, or political man," by observing "a due regimen" and never deviating "from the paths of virtue," live an unlimited time, but

"what is still more, if, after having injured himself greatly in these respects, he would apply the proper medicines, that is, frame good laws, and see them duly and wisely executed, he would recover from this dangerous disease, etc."<sup>1</sup>

These "good laws," which are to stimulate the industry of individual citizens, must appeal to their self-interest, and so induce them to seek employments which will advance national well-being. This thought is perhaps most clearly expressed in Tucker's very earliest economic work:

"As to the great point of national advantage or disadvantage, this is properly the concern of others, who sit at the helm of government and consequently whose province it is to frame the laws and regulations, relating to trade, in such a manner, as may cause the private interest of the merchant to fall in with the general good of the country . . . self and social happiness must in this case be made to unite; otherwise it will happen in this, as in most other affairs, that social happiness will not be promoted at all."<sup>2</sup>

This complete confidence that state action can, and conviction that it should, guide individual economic activity, makes Tucker, in a peculiar sense, a political economist.

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeen Sermons*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Trade*, p. xiii.

Belief in the need of universal industry among citizens, and in the efficacy of state action to secure this, might lead to socialism. Tucker condemns the class who live upon interest incomes alone, because they are not contributing, by their industry, to the national wealth:

“ Their case being directly opposed to the public good, tho’ it may be pitied, should not be provided for by the legislator. On the contrary, make their state uneasy and they must turn to industry.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, Tucker favors education of the poor, especially industrial education, and argues that they should have fair opportunity to rise by industry.<sup>2</sup> This is a further advocacy of state action to encourage industry. But although Tucker does so plead the cause of the poor, and although he does condemn the extravagance of the rich, and although he does believe that law-making and law-enforcing powers may do much to right social wrongs, he nowhere takes, or even hints at favoring, the socialistic position. On the contrary, he expressly objects to any levelling schemes. For example, he even objects to restoring the law for the equal distribution of a landed estate among all the children of the deceased owner, because he regards this as

“ running too far into the agrarian scheme of levelling and equality.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This passage was written by Tucker on the margin of the New York Public Library copy of the *Elements*, p. 134. It was a response to Archbishop Secker’s marginal note: “I hope you find a place for considering the case of those who can have no other subsistence than the interest of their money.”

<sup>2</sup>See *Charity School Sermon*. Some quotations, which bear upon the above topic, are given in treating *population*.

<sup>3</sup>*Instruct. for Trav.*, p. 30.

Elsewhere, he rightly presages the tendency of teaching the equality doctrines of the day, but it is to be noted that he himself condemns the movements "against landlords," etc., as "wild and extravagant conceits:

"The modern doctrines of the perfect equality of mankind . . . and of the necessity of contending for them even to the death tend to confirm all these wild and extravagant conceits against landlords, etc., . . . for they necessarily demolish not only crowns but coronets too, levelling all distinctions with the ground."<sup>1</sup>

When these condemnations of levelling tendencies are coupled with Tucker's anti-republicanism, expressing itself in complete skepticism of the wisdom of the populace,<sup>2</sup> it becomes very evident that no propositions of his may be reasonably given a tinge of socialistic interpretation. All of his pleas that the common people be given opportunity, educational and otherwise, to elevate their standard of living, are but corollaries of his proposition that production should be encouraged by state rewards and penalties. Tucker is an individualist rather than a socialist; but his belief in the importance of state action saves him from being an extreme individualist.

It has been said that the two ideas, (1) that industry should

<sup>1</sup> *Lett. to Shelburne*, pp. 41 and 42. Similar passages against levellers are in *A Sequel to Sir Wm. Jones' Pamphlet, etc.*, pp. 7 and 25.

<sup>2</sup> Clarke in *Survey of Strength and Opulence of Great Britain*, p. 40, says that Tucker once told him that "he hardly ever knew an unpopular measure to be a bad one, or a popular to be truly salutary."

Tucker held that "a democratic government is despotic by nature" and opposed the "universal suffrage of the vile and ignorant." (See *Lett. to Shelburne*, pp. 98 and 114.) In the letter to Dr. Birch, Dec. 20, 1756, Tucker speaks of the "wicked, ungrateful, senseless mob" (see *Birch Mss.* in the Brit. Museum). There are a number of other similar characterizations of the mass of the people who always appear to Tucker as "the mob." See *Four Tracts*, p. 96.

be encouraged, and (2) that the state, by law, should give that encouragement, are the essential components of Tucker's theory of national prosperity. It is now further to be observed that this theory of prosperity is fundamental to his whole economic work. Like that of a greater writer to come after him, his large problem concerns the wealth of nations. The ideas that increased national industry is desirable, and that state action should stimulate it, essentials of his prosperity theory, leaven all of his economic writings. They re-enforce him in arguments for the naturalization of industrious foreigners, against the emigration of British citizens, and in favor of plans for increase of population; they are premises to his politics for breaking up great estates, enclosing commons and reclaiming wastes; they background his pleas against the parish settlement and the apprenticeship acts; they lead him to oppose chartered companies and they underlie his mercantilism; they account for his emphasis upon the policing function of taxes. A single thoughtful reading of Tucker's work, as outlined in Chapters II to VII of this Part II, will substantiate the above statements. The two ideas, then, which are elemental in his theory of national prosperity, are presuppositions in his treatment of each of the leading themes of his economic writings, viz., population, agriculture, manufacture, commerce and taxation. Thus, in epitome, Tucker's whole economic work is a theory of national prosperity.

#### V. HISTORICAL SENSE

Tucker possessed the historical sense. Since this gave color to all of his writings, it is fitting to show, in this opening chapter of the exposition of his works, that he did possess the historical instinct.

Tucker was never a closet theorist. He put himself in

command of facts. He was the making of an historian. He began his writings, as has been noted, with pamphlets treating current history. In the naturalization controversy, two of his papers traced the history, respectively, of the British attitude towards foreigners in general, and towards Jews in particular. In his attack upon privileged companies, he reviewed the monopoly movement in British history from Elizabeth's day to his own. Frequently throughout his works original sources are quoted, early and later statutes, parliamentary records, and reports of special commissions. His historical researches and his close observation of every-day business in London and Bristol, won for him considerable reputation as one who had a broad knowledge of commercial facts.

A few citations from his works may evidence that Tucker had real historic appreciation. In his *Instructions for Travellers*, he addresses himself to that class of travelers "who will aim to study the effects and consequences of systems of religion, government and commerce." He advises such a traveler that

"He must observe how these systems operate on different people or on the same people at different periods. . . . For in fact the human mind is in some sense but as clay in the hands of the potters . . . molded . . . by these different systems. So that the political, the religious and commercial character of any people will be found for the most part to be the result of this threefold combination of religion, government and commerce on their minds."<sup>1</sup>

This same idea of environment's influence he applied years later to an individual case, explaining Locke's leading polit-

<sup>1</sup> *Instruct. for Trav.*, p. 4. Similarly "every nation has its peculiar bias." *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part i*, p. 1.



ical thesis, individual liberty, as an outgrowth of the troublous religious environment in which he matured:

“Locke . . . in his early life was a witness to grievous persecutions inflicted on the score of religion . . . he saw . . . that the interests of the state were not at all concerned in maintaining that rigid, universal, conformity in religion for which bigots of those times so fiercely contended. . . . he inferred, and very justly that every man had a right not only to think but even to act for himself in all such religious matters as did not oppose or clash with the interests of civil society.” Had he stopped here it would have been well “but alas! He extended those ideas which were true only in what concerns religion to matters of a mere civil nature and even to the origin of civil government itself.”<sup>1</sup>

A striking generalization upon the influence of the commercial system upon national life occurs in Tucker's treatment of monopolies under Queen Elizabeth. He regarded her as an arbitrary ruler, who granted monopolies, for goodly consideration, partly because she did not want her subjects to grow rich through freedom of trade. She feared that if her subjects became individually more nearly her equals in wealth, they would grow more independent in thought and in speech, according to the general principle that

“Trade and industry naturally create an independent turn of thinking which circumstance necessarily inspires an horror and detestation of arbitrary power. Moreover, freedom of trade brings with it, freedom of debate as well as freedom of thinking.”<sup>2</sup>

This puts the emphasis upon commerce, *i. e.*, upon economics, in the interpretation of history.

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise on Gov't*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements*, pp. 151-152.

A caution against rash national analogies reads:

“It doth not follow that that system which might comport well enough with the circumstances of the little state of Geneva would be proper for so large an empire as the British.”<sup>1</sup>

His rules for exegetical interpretation indicate the historic imagination:

“Let us place ourselves in the situation of those who heard the speaker or writer himself; and let us endeavor to find out what were the meanings of the words at the time they were spoken, not what they may now imply at times so far distant and among people so very different in their customs and manners.”<sup>2</sup>

Although he sometimes speaks of the “natural” order of things and of “natural rights,” Tucker does not often use this eighteenth century form of thinking. In one of the following passages he expressly takes exception to it. In 1749 he charged that Mr. Chubb’s great deficiency was that he judged that ideas ought to come to others just as they came to him,

“without making the necessary allowance for the difference of times, places, customs, and the faculties of different men. With this fundamental error he went on. He viewed every object through one end of the telescope and thought it necessary for all mankind to do the same. Hence arose his positiveness about fitnesses, relations, etc., which at the bottom amounted to no more than this, that if other men saw things precisely in the same light as he did, without taking in or

<sup>1</sup> *Apology for the Church of England, 1st Ed.*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Six Sermons*, pp. 23-24. Similar statement in *Two Dissertations*, pp. 4 and 5.

leaving out any other ideas, then the fitness, the relation and the truth of the case was so and so. Which indeed might frequently be allowed him and yet his observations be very impertinent and inconclusive, as arising not from a full, but from a partial view of the subject in debate."<sup>1</sup>

Again, in the American controversy twenty-five years later, he challenged the argument of the colonies because

"they have recourse to what they call immutable truths, the abstract reasoning and eternal fitness of things and in short to such rights of human nature which [sic] they suppose to be inalienable and indefeasible. Former laws and precedents carry little or no conviction to people who argue after this manner. . . . The parent state grounds her present claim . . . on facts and precedents . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Such a paragraph might have been written by Burke.

Tucker condemns a number of the views of his day with reference to history:

(1) He combats Rousseau's concept of the heavenly savage by arguing, from reports of travellers, that the Indians were more subject to disease than the white men, and were lazy, gluttonous and improvident.<sup>3</sup>

(2) In a letter to Lord Kames he criticizes the Saxon system of government in England. He says that "great and glorious things are now said of the Saxon government," and yet he sees "no reason for praise save distance in time and difficulty of disproving heavenly allegations." The Saxon government was "founded on conquest and slavery, and slavery was its staple trade—not exactly a

<sup>1</sup> *Two Dissertations*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Tract V*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> See *Treatise on Gov't*, pp. 182-188.

delectable pattern for modern nations.”<sup>1</sup> In another place, speaking of the Gothic government, he becomes ironical in contemplation of the good-old-days idea :

“Doubtless these were very happy times indeed! And what a pity it is that those persons who are so lavish in their praises of Old England and dissatisfied with our present modern constitution, had not lived in these golden days when they might have enjoyed old England to perfection!”<sup>2</sup>

(3) In a critical passage in a letter to Lord Kames he opposes a view of historian David Hume. This passage well illustrates his habit of examining original records, and even of noting folk-lore. It is also notable since Tucker’s view here is the one sustained by modern research. He says :

“In Mr. Hume’s history of the Anglo Saxons he follows the stream of historians in asserting that they exterminated all the natives; and consequently had no slaves or villians. But I could never find any proof of this; and the appearance of things during the Heptarchy strongly indicates the contrary; the feudal system being as evidently the system among them as among all northern nations. And it is hard to say what could induce them to be so singular in this respect. I am myself a Welshman: we have no tradition in our country of any such measure. On the contrary we suppose that all the slaves remained slaves to their new masters and the gentlemen fled into Wales. Ergo, the Welsh are all gentlemen. Moreover the Danes and Swedes never mention this circumstance when they mention the expedition and victories of the Anglo Saxons, their ancestors, and if Mr. Hume will reflect on the price settled for killing a Welshman in Cambridgeshire, taken out

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Kames* (Alex. Fras. Tytler), vol. iii, p. 183. Letter of June 24, 1782.

<sup>2</sup> *2nd Lett. on Naturalization*, p. 9.

of Hickes, he will conclude that that Welshman must have been a slave.”<sup>1</sup>

(4) Tucker also opposed the concept of rhythmic history, the idea that nations must die. He answered to the plea:

“That all human things have the seeds of decay within themselves, great empires, great cities, great commerce, all of them receive check not from accidental events but from necessary principles. . . . as the ideas and terms used are borrowed from the state of natural bodies and . . . transferred to political constitutions one thing is taken for granted in this argument to which I cannot readily assent. . . . (i. e.) that as all animals, by having the seeds of decay within themselves must die sooner or later, therefore political or commercial institutions are subject to the like fate and on the same principles. Now this remains to be proved, for the parallel doth not hold in all respects and tho’ the body politic may come to an end as well as the body natural there is no physical necessity that it must. . . . In one word, the constitution of the body natural is so framed that after a certain period of time no remedy in nature can restore it to its pristine health and vigor . . . But diseases of the body politic are not absolutely incurable.”<sup>2</sup>

Accurate prophecy is a test of historical insight. Tucker prophesied the inevitable separation of Great Britain and the American colonies when statesmen thought the only question was the terms upon which these should remain under British authority. After the struggle was over and independence had been declared by the colonies, he argued that if the British “would turn over a few pages of authentic his-

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Kames*, vol. iii, pp. 176 and 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Tract I*, pp. 55-56. This thought is suggested in the letter to Hume in 1758. See Clarke’s *Survey of Strength and Opulence of Great Britain*, p. 27. See for similar idea *Seventeen Sermons*, p. 158.

tory, either ancient or modern," they would learn that colonies,

"humble and modest in their infant state . . . as they rise in strength become proud and insolent . . . incessantly aiming at emancipation . . . The Stamp Act, therefore, only hastened that struggle which might otherwise have been deferred a short time longer but which must assuredly have taken place before the expiration of many years."<sup>1</sup>

Another bold prophecy is only now in the course of fulfillment. In 1780, before the colonies had fully achieved their independence, when British public sentiment, British statesmen and British soldiers were yet determined upon subjugation of the rebels, Tucker dreamed a dream of great empire<sup>2</sup> in this western world. It has taken a century and a quarter for Europe to come abreast of this vision:

"Nor is it the least surprising that a country circumstanced like America should so soon have acquired so formidable a share of power. Its natural advantages of climate, soil, extent of territory, both of land and water, are all favorable to agriculture, trade and population; and a spirit of industry, a thirst for gain and an ardent desire of that very independence which has at length been set up, have led the colonists to improve with unremitting application all those means which nature has thrown into their hands. And thus the wise economy of providence diffuses blessings in succession to all the different orders of creation. Learning, Arts and Sciences, Religion, Government, Riches and Power have all been progressive since

<sup>1</sup> *Dispassionate Tho'ts on Amer. War*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Tucker was not a consistent prophet with reference to the American destiny. In *Cui Bono*, p. 119, he says the American colonies will be a "disunited people till the end of time . . . divided and subdivided into little commonwealths." The prophecy given above, however, is the only one he argues out at any length.

the appearance of the present system: and there is nothing chimerical in the hypothesis to suppose, that in a certain period, the American continent will be the principal seat of all these valuable possessions and make a most distinguished figure among the nations of the earth and in the history of the world; while the European states are sinking into weakness, poverty and contempt.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dispassionate Tho'ts on Amer. War*, pp. 26-27.