

competition. Here is where business acumen has its office and derives the maximum of return with the minimum of risk. Its income is conditioned by the care with which it meets competition (viz., production, efficiency, capital turnover, etc.). But if the competition that assails it is free and it has no guaranty from government furnishing it protection it is no monopoly. Government and not nature creates monopolies.

What briefly is monopoly? Any human production activity from the functioning of which competition is excluded. It can only be excluded by government. Voluntary combination cannot exclude it. A land title is a monopoly. But it exists because government creates it. Its convenience in assuring undisturbed possession has helped to perpetuate it. Its monopoly privilege is the private collection of ground rent, the annual value of its advantages. This rent is determined, speaking generally, by population and its activities, and the public services supplied it, these being included in the activities of the population.

Monopolies then are not what the government at Washington thinks them to be. They are *not* Big Businesses, Chain or Department Stores, Corporations or Combinations of Capital.

There is now some idle talk of licencing business. The law of competition has already licenced them. Free that law, put competition to work without interruption or restriction and there will be no monopolies. To license businesses is to create more monopolies.

## The Golden Age of Economic Thought

THERE is no period in history in which there were so great a number of men gifted with real vision as in the time of France immediately preceding the Revolution.

These were the Physiocrats of whom Dr. Francois Quesnay was the titular head and the philosophers who shared their liberal views, but did not subscribe wholly to their economic opinions. Nearly all were believers in natural rights and all were free traders. Dr. Quesnay who was eminent in medicine founded his system on natural laws, but in his contention, shared by his disciples, that agriculture and mining were the sole means of increasing the wealth of a nation he narrowed his concept to a point which prevented its acceptance as a programme of general application.

But he laid stress as did the others upon individualism and freedom. Industry and commerce must be unshackled, and they taught that what served the true interests of the individual served alike the interests of society. As Henry George later expressed it in homely phrase, "Man-kind is all hooked and buttoned together." Turgot, who for twenty months filled the post of Finance Minister, and who himself was a physiocrat though standing aloof

from them on account of what he regarded as their sectarianism, had written, "It has been too constantly the practice of governments to sacrifice the happiness of individuals to the alleged rights of society. It is forgotten that society is made up of individuals."

It is interesting, too, to note that Turgot united the economic law with the moral law.

It was Gournay who held that competition was the most effective spur to production, and it was he who invented the phrase, "*laissez faire, laissez passer*." It was Gournay who most vigorously opposed the regulation of the prices of commodities by government.

Quesnay, as leader of the Physiocrats, was regarded with something little short of veneration by his followers. It was Turgot, who by reason of his brief occupancy of the post of Finance Minister, accorded the economists official recognition of their principles.

Turgot's abolition of trade guilds and trade monopolies was the crowning act of his official career. It is doubtful if anything quite so important has been accomplished by any Finance Minister in so short a time. The nobility and the beneficiaries of privilege combined against him and forced him out of office. In this way they were aided by the designing Marie Antoinette and her influence with the weak-minded Louis. But Turgot's fame is secure and if he failed he is only one more of those who have struggled unavailingly against inequality and privilege.

In Turgot was united a wide knowledge and proficiency with a seer-like vision of a redeemed society. He is more like Henry George than any man we know in history.

On one of the earliest papers by Turgot that have come down to us is a treatise on money, and of this his friend, Du Pont de Nemours, said: "If forty years later the majority of the citizens composing the Constitutional Assembly had possessed as much knowledge as Turgot, France might have been saved the Assignats." And he might have added the Revolution as well.

A word regarding Du Pont de Nemours.\* He was the equal of his associates in mental power and like them in breath of vision, and it was he that gave the name *Physiocratie* (the natural order) to the philosophy of this forward looking group with which he was affiliated. He had met Turgot at the home of Quesnay and this acquaintance ripened into a fast friendship which lasted till the death of the Finance Minister in 1781. It was Du Pont who drew up an address to the people of France on Taxation in which he argued that taxation must be direct and levied only on visible objects.

The authorities neglected to mark the spot where

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\* This Du Pont is the honored ancestor of the Du Pont family in America. Nor has the family tradition been forgotten. There has not been a time in the history of the Henry George movement in this country when some member of the Du Pont family was not affiliated with the movement in some way.



Turgot lies buried in Bons, Normandy. But that is of little consequence. His name remains as one of those who glorified the annals of France at a time when the future of the country trembled in the balance.

It is known that in the few last days of his incumbency as Finance Minister he was engaged in working out a system of land taxation. Whether he would have found a solution, or come approximately near it, and whether his plan would have prevented the Revolution and thus perhaps the destinies of the world, who shall say? Certainly, if he had the real solution, no danger would have deterred him. And his disciples, equal to him in courage, would have raised the standard of a world rescued from chaos.

But it was not to be. The machinations of a shallow, intriguing queen and the vacillation of a weak king completed his downfall and Necker stepped into his place. Necker was an advocate of internal tariffs, belonging to the school of Colbert. Turgot had written what to this day is regarded as a forcible presentation for universal free trade. Of this treatise Voltaire said: "I have read Turgot's masterpiece. It seemed to me that I beheld a new heaven and a new earth."

Turgot sought a solution of all economic problems in the natural laws and this was his attitude of mind when scarcely twenty. This was a philosophy unknown to Necker, who, on his advent to power, introduced measures prohibiting the harvesting of grain with a scythe. Other Rooseveltian devices were adopted, such as providing that the size of handkerchiefs should be reduced.

We should not leave one individual of the Physiocratic group unnamed. That is Condorcet, perhaps the most many-sided of these libertarians. Condorcet stood like the others for free trade and the natural rights of man. He believed, like Henry George did, that mankind was inherently good. He was opposed to capital punishment for private crimes, advocated woman suffrage and proportional representation. He believed in a unicameral legislature. None of the Physiocrats, not even Quesnay or Du Pont, had a more complete vision of what a redeemed society might attain. Condorcet is a man mark of in a time when the spirit of freedom was articulate, and when it commanded more influential names than at any time in history.

When Turgot was forced out of office and Necker took his place the stage was set for the Revolution. So passed this brief period in which, like expiring candles, these great souls flashed their message on a decadent nation. Condorcet perished through exposure and Turgot lies in an unmarked grave. In this way France paid her debt to these great souls. In the day of smaller men that were to succeed them these pathfinders on the road to liberty were forgotten. Yet they could have saved France from the ruin that overtook her. Can their teachings yet save America?

## Causerie

BY THOMAS N. ASHTON

### CALIPER CAPERS

HOW to Caliper Human Skulls in Eight Hundred Easy Lessons" will be the title of a treatise to which Single Taxers—in desperation—may be driven to study as a last resort to find prominent citizens capable of learning how to untax Labor and its products and how to tax publicly-created site-values.

There's something in this skull business—figuratively if not literally.

As we gazed upon a choice collection of some seventy-five grinning dead-heads, row on row—each of which once housed the rugged honesty and tax-free notions of an American Indian—we wondered if the ghoulish grins were prompted by the Redman's mirth over our asinine "civil government" whereby we tax ourselves into pauperism whilst wealth and natural resources clutter the face of the Earth. We wondered if these skulls' silent snickers were the unexpressed surprise at how much the Redman had done, with so little, as against how little we have done with so much. We wondered if these suppressed guffaws reflected a particular humor over an especial tax object. That is, does our income-tax blank produce a louder laugh among our spiritual observers than does our tax on "profits and losses"? Or, indirectly speaking, does our tax on babies' bottles produce more hilarity than does our tax on brewery booze?

If we but knew what these Indians are laffin' at, it might help us solve our tax muddle.

We have been unable to prove that a few Indians monopolized idle land later to lease it for tepee sites at fancy ground-rents payable in wampum or what-not. There is no record that Indian ground-rents, if any, were boosted every time a papoose was born and every time a bold, bronzed and burly buck bagged a bear or snared a snipe.

The professor of anthropology fondled a shiny skull as he pensively poked calipers along, across and about its peripheral points. The earlier Indians were not long-headed, dimensionally speaking, as compared with our Boston tea-tax forebears. Nor were our forefathers as long-headed as we of today, sez the anthropologist.

"Americans are definitely growing longer and leaner. Their heads are tending in the same way as their bodies, to be longer and not so broad."

In other words, the Indians were more broad-minded than we—a fact which needs no proof other than shown in our narrow-minded views on taxation. The Indians had totem poles but no poll taxes; we have poll taxes but no totem poles.

Whilst we have been conjecturing, ever since we read "Progress and Poverty," how long this body politic can survive under our tax torture, the anthropologist dis-