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THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
TURGOT

COMPTROLLER-GENERAL OF FRANCE 1774-6

EDITED FOR ENGLISH READERS

BY

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cruelties have we subjected you? Nations entirely swept from the earth, or buried in the mines; destroyed at one time in murderous executions, at another in prolonged punishments by a slavery harder than death! But religion was only the pretext for those horrors, which indeed she reprobated with vigour; it was one of her apostles, the pious Las Casas, who, denouncing them to Europe, mitigated somewhat the calamities. ('First Discourse at the Sorbonne' (1750), *Œuv.* ii. 591.)

New America. A Prediction.—Let us turn our eyes away from those sad sights, let us cast them on the immense plains of the interior of America. Here we see no longer conquerors impelled by self-interest or ambition, we see the missionaries whom the Spirit of Christ animates. . . . Innumerable colonies form themselves day by day; by slow degrees, these savages, permitted now to be men, may be disposed to become Christians. The soil, hitherto uncultivated, is made fruitful by industrious hands. Laws faithfully observed maintain henceforth tranquillity in these favoured regions. The ravages of war are there unknown. Equality has banished from them poverty and luxury, and preserves there, with liberty, virtue and simplicity of manners; our arts will spread themselves there without our vices. Happy peoples! Thus have you been brought, in a short time, to a happiness greater than that of the oldest and most polished nations. Vast regions of America cease to complain of the ferocity of Europe. She has given you her religion, fitted to enlighten the mind and to soften manners. Europe, faithful herself to religion's laws, shall spread amongst you all the virtues and all the happiness that follows them. Europe shall find in you the perfection of her political societies and the firmest support of her well-being. ('First Discourse at the Sorbonne' (1750), *Œuv.* ii. 592.)

Decline of Ancient Eloquence.—I am not surprised at the decline of eloquence in Greece and Rome. After the division