

27.
The "Physiocrats."

we can notice a great difference. Whereas Rousseau stood alone, the other and opposite school numbered many representatives, enunciated definite principles, and received a generic name. Central figures in this school were Quesnay¹ and Turgot,² who in the earlier part of

¹ François Quesnay (1694-1774) is not the only example of a prominent French physician who, after publishing important medical and surgical treatises, turned his attention to other equally important subjects. From 1756 onward he wrote original articles in the 'Encyclopédie,' the last in 1768, ending his literary activity with mathematical studies. His works were first collected by Du Pont de Nemours with the title 'Physiocratie, ou Constitution Naturelle du Gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre Humain' (2 vols., 1767-1768). Quesnay did not invent the theory, but collected the elements contained in previous and contemporary writers, out of which he formed the system and gave it cohesion and rigour, and, by adding new traits, produced something original and effective: "L'analyse du droit naturel comme principe d'une science générale de la politique et de l'économie, la subordination de tous les éléments économiques à l'élément agraire, la théorie du produit net et de l'impôt direct sur les propriétaires, le libre échange, la théorie du gouvernement despotique éclairé, en un mot tout ce qu'il y a d'essentiel et de fondamental dans la doctrine des physiocrates est dû à Quesnay. Son influence personnelle a été très grande, sa place dans l'histoire de l'économie politique est considérable." (H. Bourgin in 'Grande Encyclopédie,' article "Quesnay").

² Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) was a younger contemporary of Quesnay. Before entering on his short but illustrious career as

one of the great statesmen of the period preceding the Revolution, he had an opportunity of applying, as Intendant of the *Généralité* of Limoges, the physiocratic principles of Quesnay and Gournay to the improvement of a poor and neglected agricultural district, introducing many economic reforms and taking a large view of the social problem. He has, in virtue of his 'Réflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses' (1766, ten years before Adam Smith), been considered by some writers to be the real founder of Political Economy, sharing, however, this title of distinction with his elder contemporaries Quesnay and Jean Claude Gournay (1712-1759). The latter added to the agricultural factor in wealth, exclusively dealt with by Quesnay and Turgot, that of industry and commerce. Both Turgot and Gournay had an extensive practical training and experience, the former through his administrative work, first as Intendant and then as Comptroller-General of Finance (see on this especially Lord Morley's *Essay on Turgot* in 'Critical Miscellanies,' vol. ii.); the latter through his residence and business travels in Spain, Hamburg, Holland, and England. "Gournay a fourni aux physiocrates leur principe fondamental, le *laissez-faire, laissez-passer*. Il a emprunté le principe aux mouvements du commerce international qu'il a très bien suivis et observés. Mais il n'a pas accepté le second principe des physiocrates: la terre est le seul élément de la richesse. Il se sépare