

based essentially on the morality of Helvetius. Robinet (*de la nature*), the French materialist who more than all the others kept in touch with metaphysics, expressly founds himself on Leibnitz.

Of Volney, Dupuis, Diderot, etc., we do not need to speak any more than of the physiocrats, now that we have shown the double derivation of French materialism from the physics of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche and Leibnitz. This antagonism could only be realized by Germans after they themselves had come into conflict with speculative metaphysics.

Just as Cartesian materialism branches into natural science, so the other tendency of French materialism merges directly into socialism and communism.

No special acuteness is required to perceive the necessary connection of the original goodness and equally intelligent endowment of men, of the omnipotence of experience, custom and education, the influence of external circumstances on men, the extreme importance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., with communism and socialism.

If man receives all his impressions and forms all his conceptions from the world of sense, and derives his experiences from the world of sense, it follows that the empirical world ought to be so constructed as to offer a wealth of truly human experiences. If enlightened self-interest is the principle of all morality, it follows that the private interests of men ought to coincide with human interests. If man is not free in the materialistic sense, that is to say, is free, not by reason of his negative strength to avoid this and that, but by reason of his positive strength to assert his true individuality, then man must not punish the crimes of individuals, but destroy the anti-social breeding-places of crime, and afford to each person sufficient social scope for the expression of his or her individuality. If man is formed by circumstances, then it is only in society that he develops his real nature, and the strength of his nature must be measured, not with the strength of the isolated individual, but with the strength of society.

These and similar sentences may be found almost word for word in the writings even of the oldest French materialists. This is not the place to criticize them. Significant of the socialist tendency of materialism is Mandeville's (one of the older English pupils of Locke) apology for vice. He shows that vice is indispensable and useful in present-day society. This, however, was no justification for present-day society.

The doctrines of French materialism form the starting-point of Fourier. The followers of Babeuf were crude, uncivilized materialists, but even fully-developed communism derived directly from French materialism.

The latter, in the shape given it by Helvetius, returned to its motherland, to England. On the morality of Helvetius, Bentham founded his system of enlightened self-interest, just as Owen, proceeding from Bentham's system, founded English communism. On being banished to England, the Frenchman Cabet was stimulated by the communistic ideas he found there, and returned to France, to become the most popular, albeit most superficial, representative of communism here.

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

Pourquoi la revolution d'Angleterre a-t-elle reussi. Discours sur l'histoire de la revolution d'Angleterre, Paris, 1850.[10]

The object of M. Guizot's pamphlet is to show why Louis Philippe and Guizot's policy ought not to have been overthrown on the 24th February 1848, and how the reprehensible character of the French is to blame for the fact that the July monarchy of 1830 ignominiously collapsed after eighteen years of laborious existence and was not blessed with the security of tenure enjoyed by the English monarchy since 1688.

From this pamphlet it may be seen how even the ablest individuals of the *ancien régime*, how even people who in their own way are not devoid of historical talent have been so completely thrown off their balance by the fatal event of February (1848) as to have lost all historical comprehension, even the comprehension of their former behaviour. Instead of being impelled by the February Revolution to study more closely the wholly different historical conditions, and the wholly different positions occupied respectively by the various classes of society in the French monarchy of 1830 and in the English monarchy of 1688, M. Guizot gets rid of the entire difference between the two situations in a few moral phrases and asserts in conclusion that the policy overthrown on the 24th February "can alone master revolutions, as it can sustain States."

The question which M. Guizot professes to answer may be precisely formulated as follows: Why has middle-class society developed in England under the form of a constitutional monarchy for a longer period than in France?

The following passage serves to show the nature of M. Guizot's acquaintance with the course of middle-class development in England: "Under the reigns of George I and George II, public opinion veered in another direction; foreign policy ceased to be its chief concern; internal administration, the maintenance of peace, questions of finance, of the colonies, of trade, the development and the struggles of the parliamentary régime, became the dominant preoccupations of the Government and of the public" (p. 168).

M. Guizot discovers only two factors in the reign of William III that are worthy of mention: the maintenance of the equilibrium between Parliament and the Crown, and the maintenance of the European equilibrium by means of the struggle against Louis XIV. Under the Hanoverian dynasty, public opinion suddenly "veered in another direction," nobody knows how and why.

It is obvious that M. Guizot has applied the most banal platitudes of French parliamentary debate to English history, believing he has thereby explained it. Similarly, when he was Minister, M. Guizot imagined he was balancing on his shoulders the pole of equilibrium between Parliament and the Crown, whereas in reality he was only jobbing the whole of the French State and the whole of French society bit by bit to the Jewish financiers of the Paris Bourse.

M. Guizot does not think it worth the trouble to mention that the wars against Louis XIV were purely wars of competition for the destruction of French commerce and of French sea power; that under William III, the rule of the financial middle class received its first sanction through the establishment of the Bank of England, and the introduction of the national debt; that a new upward impetus was given to the manufacturing middle class through the consistent enforcement of the protective fiscal system.

For him only political phrases have importance. He does not even mention that under Queen Anne the ruling parties could only maintain themselves and the constitutional monarchy by forcibly prolonging the life of Parliament to seven years, thus almost entirely destroying popular influence over the government.

Under the Hanoverian dynasty England had already progressed so far as to be able to wage competitive war against France in the modern form. England herself combated France only in America and the East Indies, whilst on the Continent she was content to pay foreign princes like Frederick II to wage war against France. When, therefore, foreign politics assumed another aspect, M. Guizot says: "foreign policy ceased to be a chief concern" and its place was taken by "the maintenance of peace." The extent to which "the development and the struggles of the parliamentary régime became the dominant preoccupation of the Government and of the public" may be inferred from the bribery stories about the Walpole ministry, which at any rate bear a close resemblance to the scandals which came to light under M. Guizot.

Why the English Revolution entered on a more prosperous career than the French Revolution subsequently did is explained by M. Guizot from two causes: first, from the fact that the English Revolution bore a thoroughly religious character, and therefore broke in no way with the traditions of the past, and secondly

from the fact that from the outset it did not wear a destructive, but a constructive aspect, Parliament defending the old existing laws against the encroachments of the Crown.

As regards the first point, M. Guizot forgets that the free thought of the French Revolution, which makes him shudder so convulsively, was imported into France from no other country than England. Locke was its father, and in Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke it assumed that lively form which later underwent such a brilliant development in France.

Thus we reach the strange result that the same free thought upon which, according to M. Guizot, the French Revolution came to grief was one of the most essential products of the religious English Revolution.

With respect to the second point, M. Guizot forgets that at the outset the French Revolution was just as conservative as the English, if not more so. Absolutism, especially in the guise which it had latterly assumed in France, was an innovation even there, and against this innovation the parliaments arose and defended the old laws, the *us et coutumes* of the old estates-of-the-realm monarchy. And whereas the first step of the French Revolution was the revival of the Estates General which had been extinct since Henry IV and Louis XIII, the English Revolution has no feature of an equally classical conservative nature to exhibit.

According to M. Guizot, the chief result of the English Revolution was this, that it was made impossible for the king to govern against the will of Parliament and of the House of Commons in Parliament. The entire revolution may be summed up by saying that at the commencement both sides, the Crown and Parliament, overstepped their limits and went too far until under William III they reached the proper equilibrium and neutralized each other. That the subjection of the monarchy was its subjection to the rule of a class M. Guizot deems it superfluous to mention.

Consequently, he does not feel it incumbent on him to ascertain how this class acquired the power necessary to make the Crown its servant. He appears to think that the whole struggle between Charles I and Parliament related to purely political privileges. For what purpose Parliament and the class represented therein needed these privileges we are not told. Neither does M. Guizot refer to the direct interferences of Charles I with free competition, which rendered the commerce and the trade of England increasingly impossible; or the dependence upon Parliament into which Charles fell ever more hopelessly, through his continuous financial distress, the more he tried to defy Parliament. According to M. Guizot, therefore, the whole Revolution is to be explained by the evil intent and religious fanaticism of a few disturbers of the peace who could not content themselves with a moderate freedom. M. Guizot has just as little enlightenment to furnish with regard to the connection of the religious movement with the development of middle-class society. Of course, the Republic was likewise the mere work of a number of ambitious, fanatical, and malevolent spirits. That simultaneously efforts were being made to introduce the Republic in Lisbon, Naples, and Messina, as in England, under the influence of the Dutch example, is a fact which is not mentioned at all.

Although M. Guizot never loses sight of the French Revolution, it does not occur to him that the transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy is everywhere effected only after violent struggles and after passing through the stage of the Republic, and that even then, the old dynasty, being useless, must give way to a usurping collateral branch. Consequently, he has nothing but the most trivial commonplaces to utter respecting the overthrow of the English restored monarchy. He does not even cite the proximate causes: the fears entertained by the great new landowners, who had been created by the Reformation, at the prospect of restoration of Catholicism, when they would have been obliged to surrender all the former Church property which had been stolen, which meant that the ownership of seven-tenths of the entire soil of England would have changed hands; the horror of the trading and industrial middle class at Catholicism, which by no means suited its commerce; the nonchalance with which the Stuarts had sold, for their own advantage and that of the Court nobility, the whole of English industry and commerce, that is, had sold their own country, to the Government of France, which was then maintaining a very dangerous, and in many respects, successful competition with the English.

As M. Guizot everywhere leaves out the most important factors, there is nothing for him to do but to present an extremely inadequate and banal narration of merely political events.

The great riddle for M. Guizot, which he can only solve by pointing to the superior intelligence of the English, the riddle of the conservative character of the English Revolution, is explained by the continuous alliance which united the middle class with the largest section of the great landowners, an alliance that essentially distinguishes the English Revolution from the French Revolution, which destroyed large landed property by parcelling out the soil. This class of large landowners, which had originated under Henry VIII, unlike the French feudal land-ownership in 1789, did not find itself in conflict but rather in complete harmony with the conditions of life of the bourgeoisie. Its land-ownership, in fact, was not feudal, but middle class. On the one hand, it placed at the disposal of the middle class the necessary population to carry on manufactures, and on the other hand, it was able to impart to agriculture a development which corresponded to the state of industry and of commerce. Hence its common interests with the middle class, hence its alliance with the latter.

With the consolidation of the constitutional monarchy in England, English history comes to a full stop, as far as M. Guizot is concerned. All that follows is for him confined to a pleasant sea-saw between Tories and Whigs, and this means the great debate between M. Guizot and M. Thiers.

In reality, however, the colossal development and transformation of commercial society in England began with the consolidation of the English monarchy. Where M. Guizot sees only soft repose and idyllic peace, the most violent conflicts, the most drastic revolutions, were in reality developing. First of all, under the constitutional monarchy manufactures underwent an expansion hitherto undreamed of, in order then to make way for the great industry, the steam-engine, and the gigantic factories. Whole classes of the population disappeared, new classes took their place, with new conditions of life and new needs. A large new middle class emerged; while the old bourgeoisie fought the French Revolution, the new captured the world market. It became so all-powerful that even before the Reform Act placed political power directly in its hands, it had compelled its opponents to legislate almost solely in its interests and according to its needs. It captured direct representation in Parliament and utilized it for the destruction of the last vestiges of real power which remained to landed property. Lastly, it is at this moment engaged in razing to the ground the splendid structure of the English constitution before which M. Guizot stands in admiration.

And while M. Guizot congratulates the English that among them the noxious growths of French social life, republicanism and socialism, have not undermined the foundation pillars of the unique all-blessing monarchy, the class antagonisms in English society have been developing to a point that is without example in any other country. A middle class without rival in wealth and productive forces confronts a proletariat which is likewise without rival in power and concentration. The tribute which M. Guizot pays to England finally resolves itself into this: that there under the protection of the constitutional monarchy the elements making for social revolution have developed to a far greater extent than in all the other countries of the world put together.

When the threads of English development get entangled in a knot, which he seemingly can no longer cut by more political phrases, M. Guizot takes refuge in religious phrases, in the armed intervention of God. Thus the spirit of God suddenly comes over the Army and prevents Cromwell from proclaiming himself king, etc. M. Guizot saves himself from his conscience through God, and from the profane public through his style.

In fact, it is not merely a case of *les rois s'en vont*, but also of *les capacités de la bourgeoisie s'en vont*.

FOOTNOTES:

[10] Why the English Revolution was successful. A lecture on the history of the English Revolution, Paris, 1850.

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+-----+ | Typographical errors corrected in text: ||| Page 15:
'with' replaced with 'which' ||| +-----+

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