

erature so perfect a book as this? In these days we write histories on far profounder methods; but for the story of ten ordinary years Mr. Freeman and Mr. Froude will require a thousand pages; and Macaulay's brilliant annals, we are told, needed more time to write than the events needed to happen.

I often take up my Buffon. They tell us now that Buffon hardly knew the elements of his subject, and lived in the palæozoic era of science. It may be, but I find in Buffon a commanding thought, the earth and its living races in orderly relation, and in the centre man with his touch of them and his contrast to them. What organic thought flows in every line of his majestic scheme! What suggestions in it, what an education it is in itself! And if Buffon is not a man of science, assuredly he is a philosopher. No doubt his ideas of fibres and cells were rudimentary, his embryology weak, and his histology rude; but he had the root of the matter when he treated of animals as living organisms, and not simply as accumulations of microscopic particles. Now Buffon is a typical worker of the eighteenth century, at its high-water mark of industry, variety of range, human interest and organizing life.

We may take Adam Smith, Hume, Priestley, Franklin; they are four of the best types of the century; with its keen hold on moral, social, and physical truth at once; its genius for scientific and for social observation, its inexhaustible curiosity; and its continual sense that man stands face to face with Nature. They felt the grand dualism of all knowledge in a way that perhaps we fail to grasp it with our infinity of special information, and a certain hankering after spiritualities that we doubt, and infinitesimal analyses which cease to fructify. Adam Smith, the first (alas! perhaps the last) real economist, did

not devote his life to polishing up a theory of rent. Astronomy, society, education, government, morals, psychology, language, art, were in turns the subject of his study, and in all he was master; they all moved him alike, as part of man's work on earth. He never would have founded political economy if he had merely been an economist. And all this is more true of Hume, with a range even wider, an insight keener, a judgment riper, a creative method even more original. And so, Priestley and Franklin: as keen about gases and electric flashes as about the good of the commonwealth, and the foundations of human belief. And when Turgot, himself one of the best of this band of social reformers, said of Franklin,—

*Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis,*

it is true, in a wide sense, of them all, and especially of Turgot himself. They all sought to conquer the earth, as the dwelling-place of a reformed society of men.

This encyclopædic, social spirit belongs to all alike. We recognize in all the zeal to make their knowledge fruitful, systematic, common to all, useful to man. Out of fashion as such a thing is to us, every sentence they utter bears its meaning on its face; every book, every voyage, every discovery, is hailed with *eureka* through Europe; the voyages of travellers, or the surgical operation for cataract, instantly affect history, morals, logic, and philosophy. They can not rest till every corner of the planet is explored, till the races of man are compared, and the products of the earth are stored in museums, classified in orders, grouped into kingdoms. Science and social life, nay, philosophy and morals, were strangely transformed when the limits and the form of man's earth were first exactly realized. Cook and Banks, Anson and Bougainville, reveal to Europe the