

view that morals and politics might derive the same benefit from the science of calculation as the physical sciences had already experienced, seems to have been Turgot. To show the importance of this view, Condorcet wrote his much quoted but little read essay on the application of analysis to decisions based on the plurality of votes. In his Introduction the author laments that his friend, on whose suggestions he had commenced his work, did not live to see it finished.¹ It would have been interesting to know whether so eminent a practical philosopher as Turgot is considered to have been, would have been encouraged by his friend's specimen of political algebra, or whether he would have held the opinion of Mill, who saw in these "applications of the calculus of probabilities . . . the real opprobrium of mathematics."²

¹ (*Loc. cit.*, p. i.) "Si l'humanité n'eût pas eu le malheur, longtemps irréparable, de le perdre trop tôt, cet ouvrage eût été moins imparfait: éclairé par ses conseils, j'aurois vu mieux ou plus loin, et j'aurois avancé avec plus de confiance des principes qui auroient été les siens. Privé d'un tel guide, il ne me reste qu'à faire à sa mémoire l'hommage de mon travail, en faisant tous mes efforts pour le rendre moins indigne de l'amitié dont il m'honorait."

² There is no doubt that the writings of Condorcet, through the useless accumulation of formulæ with very little substance behind them, contributed to bring the whole theory into discredit. Another still more eminent contemporary mathematician, D'Alembert, after having occupied himself at considerable length with problems in probabilities, formed an unfavourable opinion of the usefulness

of the calculus. Gouraud (quoted by Todhunter, p. 293) says: "Quant au reste des mathématiciens, ce ne fut que par le silence ou le dédain qu'il répondit aux doutes que d'Alembert s'était permis d'émettre. Mépris injuste et malhabile où tout le monde avait à perdre et qu'une postérité moins prévenue ne devait point sanctionner." It is interesting to note that Laplace, in his historical account at the end of his 'Essai Philosophique,' does not refer either to Condorcet or to D'Alembert. J. S. Mill ('Logic,' vol. ii. p. 66) says: "It is obvious, too, that even when the probabilities are derived from observation and experiment, a very slight improvement in the data, by better observations, or by taking into fuller consideration the special circumstances of the case, is of more use than the most elaborate application of the calculus to probab-