

Kenneth Clark  
CIVILISATION

Vol. 3

Edited with Notes  
by  
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&  
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THE SIGN OF



A GOOD BOOK

THE EIHŌSHA LTD.

—Tokyo—

'The Smile of Reason'  
'The Fallacies of Hope'  
'Heroic Materialism'

from

*Civilisation* by Kenneth Clark

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## まえがき

*Civilisation* (3) を刊行するにあたり、われわれは先ず、既刊 (1), (2) を通してわれわれに激励を送って下さった全国の数多くの読者に対して、心からの感謝を捧げたい。われわれは、これによって Kenneth Clark の原著書の第 4 章 *Man—the Measure of all Things* から始めて、ルネサンス期以降現代に至るまでの主要な部分のすべてを網羅したことになるのである。

ルネサンスが人間の解放という点において文明の歴史の重要な転換期であったとするならば、知識への希求と合理主義とによって市民の覚醒が促されたという点で、本書最初の *The Smile of Reason* (原書第 10 章) は、近代社会の発展期として極めて重要な時期をあらわす。続く *The Fallacies of Hope* (同 12 章)、*Heroic Materialism* (同 13 章) を合わせて、これは、Clark 流のヨーロッパ文明の近代史としての体系を整えているといつてよい。

ルネサンス期における人間解放が古典の知識と結びついたことは周知の通りである。啓蒙主義は、その延長として現われた。懐疑主義や合理主義は、唯物論、不可知論とも合わせて、要するにヒューマニズムの発展にほかならないのである。そしてその輝かしい結実が、デイドロ、ダランベール等による『百科全書』の編纂であった。絶対的権威に対する抵抗挑戦として現われた『百科全書』が、民権運動を誘発するのは自然の成り行きであった。いったん民衆が自らの権利に目ざめるや、そこにかつてなかったロマンティシズムの炎が燎原の火の勢で燃え広がるのも当然であった。そのエネルギーがフランス大革命を生み出したのである。

しかしそのロマンティシズムに託された希望は、果してどのように成就されたのか。フランス革命に対するワーズワスの幻滅、皇帝ナポレオンに対するベートーヴェンの失望にそれは集約されるといえるかも知れない。“*Fallacies of Hope*” がすべてを象徴するようなアイロニイは、文明の進歩が担わざるを得ない宿命だといふべきであろうか。

産業革命も、希望に満ちた運動であったにもかかわらず、結果においては、イギリスの国家を二分しかねない危機を招き、中産階級と芸術家との間に越え難い断層を生じさせるに至った。そして人間性という点からみると、ここに起こった産業主義は、対仏戦争における勝利より大きな敗北をイギリスにもたらしたのであった。19世紀において、前時代までの英雄と比肩すべき人物が、かの偉大な土木技師・造船家 J・K・ブルーネルであったという指摘から、われわれは、産業主義に続く今日のテクノクラートの脅威を感じざるを得ないのである。「芸術家としての英雄」(Vol. 2 参照)は、もはや過去のものとなってしまったのか。文明の将来はどうなるのであろうか。「楽観は許されるかも知れない。しかしわれわれの前途を、必ずしも手ばなしで喜ぶ気にはなれない。」Clark の結びの言葉である。

このシリーズを締めくくるのに際して、編注者として十分に言葉をつくし得ないのは、甚だ残念である。が、(1)、(2)に対すると同様に、大方のご叱正を仰ぎたいというわれわれの念願がかなえられるならば幸である。最後に、このシリーズの刊行に惜しみなき支援を送って下さった英宝社のかたがたに心からの感謝を申し上げる次第である。

1973年 晩 秋

編 注 者

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## I The Smile of Reason

The busts of the successful dramatists of eighteenth-century Paris stand in the foyer of the Comédie Française, the national theatre of France, which, strange as it may seem to us today, did a great deal, for a hundred years, to promote good sense and humanity. What witty, intelligent faces! And here is the wittiest and most intelligent of them all; in fact, at a certain level, one of the most intelligent men that has ever lived, Voltaire [1]. He is smiling—the smile of reason. Perhaps this state of mind originated with the French philosopher Fontenelle who, by living to be nearly a hundred, bridged the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the world of Newton and the world of Voltaire. He held a position known as ‘perpetual secretary’ of the Academy of Science. He told someone that he had never run and never lost his temper. A friend asked him if he had ever laughed. He said: ‘No, I have never made ha ha.’ But he smiled, and so do all the other distinguished writers, philosophers, dramatists and hostesses of the French eighteenth century: Crébillon, Diderot, Marivaux, D’Alembert.

It seems to us shallow—we’ve got into deep water in the last fifty years. We feel that people ought to be more passionate, more convinced—or, as the current jargon has it, more committed. Indeed, the civilised smile of eighteenth-century France may be one of the things that have brought the whole concept of civilisation into disrepute. This is because we forgot that in the seventeenth century, with all its outpourings of genius in art and science, there were still senseless persecutions and brutal wars waged with unparalleled cruelty. By 1700 people had begun to feel that a little calm and detachment wouldn’t come amiss. The smile of reason may seem to betray a certain incomprehension of the deeper human emotions; but it didn’t preclude some strongly held beliefs—belief in natural law, belief in justice,

1. Houdon, *Voltaire*

belief in toleration. Not bad. The philosophers of the Enlightenment pushed European civilisation some steps up the hill, and in theory, at any rate, this gain was consolidated throughout the nineteenth century. Up to the 1930s people were supposed not to burn witches and other members of minority groups, or extract confessions by torture or pervert the course of justice or go to prison for speaking the truth. Except, of course, during wars. This we owe to the movement known as the Enlightenment, and above all to Voltaire.

Although the victory of reason and tolerance was won in France, it was initiated in England and the French philosophers never concealed their debt to the country that, in a score of years, had produced Newton, Locke and the Bloodless Revolution. In fact they tended to overrate the extent of political freedom in England and to exaggerate the influence of English men of letters. All the same, when Montesquieu and Voltaire visited England in the 1720s, it had enjoyed half a century of very vigorous intellectual life; and although Swift, Pope, Steele and Addison might give and receive some hard knocks in print, they weren't physically beaten up by the hired gangs of offended noblemen, or sent to prison (except Defoe) for satirical references to the Establishment. Both these things happened to Voltaire, and as a result he took refuge in England in 1726.

It was the age of great country houses. In 1722 the most splendid of all had just been completed for Marlborough, the general who had been victorious over Voltaire's country: not the sort of idea that would have worried Voltaire in the least, as he thought of all war as a ridiculous waste of human life and effort. When Voltaire saw Blenheim Palace [2] he said, 'What a great heap of stone, without charm or taste,' and I can see what he means. To anyone brought up on Mansart and Perrault, Blenheim must have seemed painfully lacking in order and propriety. It contains some vigorous inventions, but they are not always happily combined. Perhaps this is because the architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, although a man of genius, was really an amateur. Moreover, he was a natural romantic, a castle-builder, who didn't care a fig for good taste and decorum.

2. Vanbrugh, Blenheim Palace, Woodstock



Eighteenth-century England was the paradise of the amateur; by which I mean, of men rich enough and grand enough to do whatever they liked, who nevertheless did things that require a good deal of expertise. One of the things they chose to do was architecture. Wren began as a brilliant amateur and, although he made himself into a professional, he retained the amateur's freedom of approach to every problem. And two of his chief successors were amateurs by any definition. Sir John Vanbrugh wrote plays, and Lord Burlington was a connoisseur, collector and arbiter of taste—the sort of character nowadays much despised. But he built, among other things, a small masterpiece of domestic architecture, Chiswick House; and looking at the ingenious way in which the outside staircase is related to the portico, one may wonder whether many professional architects today could handle these problems of design as expertly as Lord Burlington has done. Of course, it's only a miniature. Behind the portico is a building about the size of an old parsonage, which was not intended for day-to-day existence, but for social occasions, conversation, intrigue, political gossip and a little music.

In a way these eighteenth-century amateurs were the inheritors of the Renaissance ideal of universal man. Leon Battista Alberti, the typical

universal man of the Renaissance, had also been an architect, and if we may still consider architecture to be a social art—an art by which men may be enabled to lead a fuller life—then perhaps the architect should touch life at many points and not be too narrowly specialised.

Eighteenth-century amateurism ran through everything: chemistry, philosophy, botany and natural history. It produced men like the indefatigable Sir Joseph Banks (who refused to go on Captain Cook's second voyage unless he was allowed to have *two* horn players to make music for him during dinner). There was a freshness and freedom of mind in these men that is sometimes lost in the rigidly controlled classifications of the professional. And they were independent, with all the advantages and disadvantages to society which result from that condition. They wouldn't have

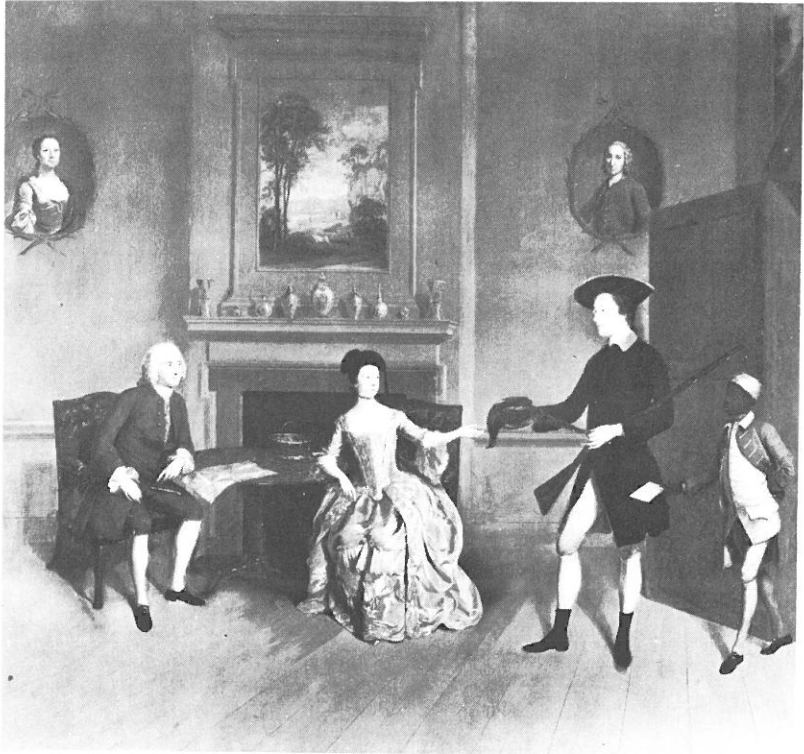


3. Hogarth, *Chairing the Candidate*

fitted into our modern utopia. I recently heard a professor of sociology say on television: 'What's not prohibited must be made compulsory.' Not a suggestion that would have attracted those eminent visitors, Voltaire and Rousseau, who drew inspiration from our philosophy, our institutions and our tolerance.

But as usual there was another side to this shining medal; and of this we have an exceptionally vivid record in the work of Hogarth. I am not myself an admirer of Hogarth, because his pictures are always such a muddle. He seemed entirely without the sense of space which one finds even in mediocre Dutch painters of the seventeenth century. But one can't deny that he had a gift of narrative invention, and in later life he did a series of pictures of an election that are better designed than the *Rake's Progress*, and a very convincing comment on our much cracked-up political system. He shows us the polling booth with imbeciles and moribunds being persuaded to make their marks. We see the successful candidate [3], like a fat, powdered capon, borne in triumph by his bruisers, who are still carrying on their private feuds; and I must confess that Hogarth conquers my prejudice by the figure of a blind fiddler, a real stroke of imagination outside the usual range of his moralising journalism.

The truth is, I think, that eighteenth-century England, in the aftermath of its middle-class revolution, had created two societies, very remote from one another. One was the society of modest country gentlemen, of which we have a perfect record in the work of a painter called Devis—comically stiff and expressionless in their cold, empty rooms [4]. The other was the urban society, of which Hogarth has left us many records, confirmed by the plays of his friend Fielding. Plenty of animal spirits, but not what we could, by any stretch, call civilisation. I hope you will not think it too facile if I compare a print by Hogarth called *A Midnight Modern Conversation* [5] with a picture painted in the same decade called *A Reading from Molière* [6] by the French artist de Troy. In this series I have tried to go beyond the narrower meaning of the word civilised. But all the same it has its value: one can't deny that the de Troy is a picture of civilised life. Even



the furniture contrives to be both beautiful and comfortable at the same time. And one reason is that whereas all the characters in Hogarth's *Midnight Conversation* are male, five out of the seven figures in the de Troy are women.

In talking about the twelfth and thirteenth centuries I said how great an advance in civilisation was then achieved by a sudden consciousness of feminine qualities; and the same was true of eighteenth-century France. I think it absolutely essential to civilisation that the male and female principles be kept in balance. In eighteenth-century France the influence of women was, on the whole, benevolent; and they were the creators of that curious institution of the eighteenth century, the salon. Those small social gatherings of intelligent men and women, drawn from all over Europe,

who met in the rooms of gifted hostesses like Madame du Deffand and Madame Geoffrin, were for forty years the centres of European civilisation. They were less poetical than the court of Urbino, but intellectually a good deal more alert. The ladies who presided over them were neither very young nor very rich: we know exactly what they looked like because French artists like Perronneau and Maurice-Quentin De La Tour portrayed them without flattery, but with a penetrating eye for their subtlety of mind. Only in a highly civilised society could ladies have preferred this kind of likeness to the glossy fakes of fashionable portraiture.

How did these ladies do it? By human sympathy, by making people feel at ease, by tact. Solitude no doubt is necessary to the poet and the philosopher, but certain life-giving thoughts are born of conversation, and conversation can flourish only in a small company where no one is stuck-up. That is a condition which cannot exist in a court, and the success of the Parisian salons depended very largely on the fact that the court and



5. Hogarth, *A Midnight Modern Conversation* (engraving)



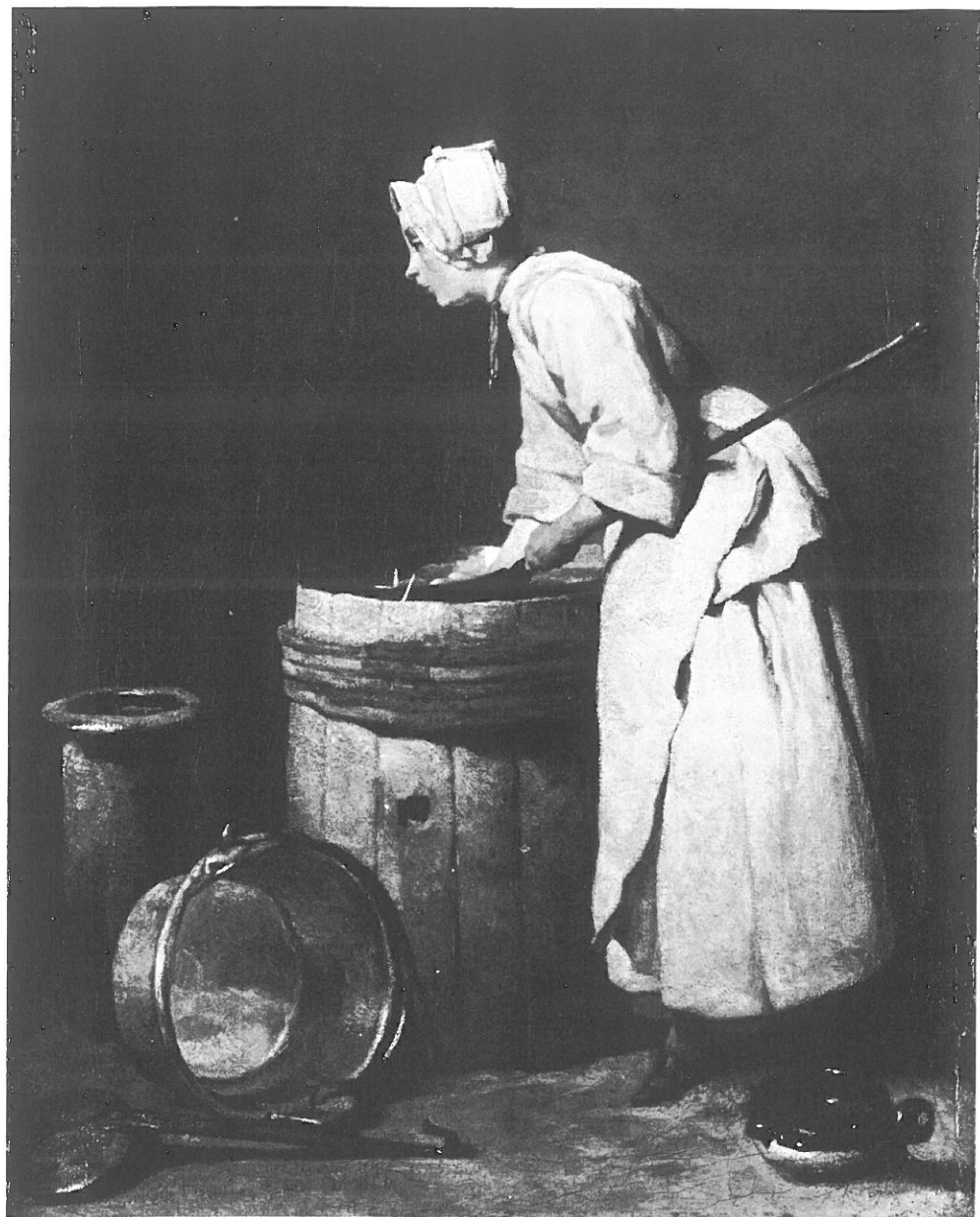




government of France were not situated in Paris, but in Versailles. It was a separate world; indeed the courtiers of Versailles always referred to it as *ce pays-ci*—this country of ours. To this day I enter the huge, unfriendly forecourt of Versailles with a mixture of panic and fatigue—as if it were my first day at school. I must add in fairness that even in the eighteenth century, when its intellectual glory had passed, the enclosed society of Versailles produced some admirable works of architecture and design. The Petit Trianon, built by the great architect Jacques-Angé Gabriel for Louis XV, is as near to perfection as may be. Of course, the very word perfection implies a limited aim, but it also implies striving for an ideal. The tact and self-control and delicate precision of every statement in that beautiful façade was never achieved in its innumerable derivatives; by varying them a hairsbreadth they become banal, and by the smallest overemphasis they become vulgar.

However, if one turns from the arts of design to the play of intellect, then life at Versailles in the eighteenth century had little to offer, and Parisian society was fortunate to be free from the stultifying rituals of court procedure and the trivial day-to-day preoccupations of politics. Another thing that helped to keep the eighteenth-century salons free from too much toadying and pomposity is that the French upper classes were not oppressively rich. They had lost a lot of money in a financial crash brought about by a financial wizard, a Scot named John Law. A margin of wealth is helpful to civilisation, but for some mysterious reason great wealth is destructive. I suppose that, in the end, splendour is dehumanising, and a certain sense of limitation seems to be a condition of what we call good taste.

An example is Chardin, the greatest painter of mid-eighteenth-century France. No one has ever had surer taste in colour and design. Every area, every interval, every tone, gives one the feeling of perfect rightness. Well, Chardin did not depict the upper classes, still less the court. He sometimes found his subjects in the gentle bourgeoisie, dressing or addressing their children; sometimes among the working class, where I think he was happiest because, in addition to the people, he loved the pots and barrels [7].



7. Chardin, *The Scullery Maid*

They have the basic nobility of design of something that has had to serve a human need unchanged for many centuries. Chardin's pictures show that the qualities immortalised in verse by La Fontaine and Molière—good sense, a good heart, an approach to human relationships both simple and delicate—survived into the mid-eighteenth century, and survive to this day in French country districts and in what the French call the *artisanat*.

The salons where the brightest intellects of France were assembled were more luxurious, but still not overwhelming. The rooms were of a normal size, and the ornament (for in those days people couldn't live without ornament) was not so elaborate as to impose a formal behaviour. People could feel that they had natural human relationships with one another. We have a complete record of how people lived in mid-eighteenth-century France, because although there were no great painters, except Chardin, there were innumerable minor artists, like Moreau le Jeune, who were content to record the contemporary scene, and so are still of interest to us after two hundred years—which artists who want to 'express themselves' will not be. They show us every hour in a young lady's life: how she pulled on her stockings before the fire, paid a call on a friend who was about to have a baby (*n'ayez pas peur, ma bonne amie*), gave the children a *canard*—a lump of sugar soaked in coffee, chattered too much at a musical tea-party (*un peu de silence s'il vous plaît*), received a billet doux from a young admirer, appeared superbly dressed at the opera, and at last went sleepily to bed. Well, nobody but a sourpuss or a hypocrite would deny that this was an agreeable way of life. Why do so many of us instinctively react against it? Because we think it is based on exploitation? Do we really think that far? If so, it is like being sorry for animals and not being vegetarians. Our whole society is based on different sorts of exploitation. Or is it because we believe that this kind of life was shallow and trivial? Well, that simply isn't true. The men who enjoyed it were no fools. Talleyrand said that only those who experienced the social life of eighteenth-century France had known the *douceur de vivre*—

the sweetness of living—and Talleyrand was certainly one of the most intelligent men who has ever taken up politics. The people who frequented the salons of eighteenth-century France were not merely a group of fashionable good-timers: they were the outstanding philosophers and scientists of the time. They wanted to publish their very revolutionary views on religion. They wanted to curtail the power of a lazy king and an irresponsible government. They wanted to change society. In the end they got rather more of a change than they had bargained for, but that is often the fate of successful reformers.

The men who met each other in the salons of Madame du Deffand and Madame Geoffrin were engaged on a great work—an encyclopedia or *Dictionnaire Raisoné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*. It was intended to advance mankind by conquering ignorance. Once more the idea was imitated from England, where Chambers's *Encyclopedia* had been published in 1751. It was a gigantic enterprise—eventually there were twenty-four folio volumes—and of course it involved a great many contributors; but the dynamo of the whole undertaking was Diderot. We can see him, smiling the smile of reason, in a picture by van Loo [8] which enraged him: he said he had been made to look like an old cocotte who was still trying to be agreeable. He was a many-sided man of high intelligence, a novelist, a philosopher, even an art critic, the great supporter of Chardin—and in the *Encyclopedia* he wrote articles on everything from Aristotle to artificial flowers. One of his charms is that you never know what he is going to say or do next. Any generalisation about the eighteenth century could be confounded from the writings of Diderot.

The aims of the *Encyclopedia* seem harmless enough to us. But authoritarian governments don't like dictionaries. They live by lies and bamboozling abstractions, and can't afford to have words accurately defined. The *Encyclopedia* was twice suppressed; and by its ultimate triumph the polite reunions in these elegant salons became precursors of revolutionary politics. They were also precursors of science. The illustrated supplement of the *Encyclopedia* is full of pictures of technical processes, most of which,



I must admit, had changed very little since the Renaissance. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century science was fashionable and romantic, as one can see from the work of Wright of Derby. His picture of an experiment with an air pump [9] brings us to the new age of scientific invention. It is an admirable example of narrative painting: the natural philosopher,

with his long hair and dedicated stare, the little girls who can't bear to witness the death of their pet cockatoo, the sensible middle-aged man who tells them that such sacrifices must be made in the interest of science, and the thoughtful man on the right who is wondering if this kind of experiment is really going to do mankind much good. They are all taking it quite seriously; but nonetheless science was to some extent an after-dinner occupation, like playing the piano in the next century. Even Voltaire, who spent a vast amount of time on weighing molten metal and cutting up worms, was only a dilettante. He lacked the patient, pedestrian realism of the experimenter, and perhaps such tenacity exists only in a milieu where quick-wittedness is less highly valued.

In the eighteenth century it emerged in a country where civilisation still had the energy of newness—Scotland. The Scottish character (and I am myself a Scot) shows an extraordinary combination of realism and reckless sentiment. The sentiment has passed into popular legend. The Scots seem to be proud of it, and no wonder. Where, but in Edinburgh, does a romantic landscape come right into the centre of the town? But it's the realism that counts and that made eighteenth-century Scotland—a poor, remote and semi-barbarous country—a force in European civilisation. Let me name some eighteenth-century Scots in the world of ideas and science: Adam Smith, David Hume, Joseph Black and James Watt. It is a matter of historical fact that these were the men who, soon after the year 1760, changed the whole current of European thought and life. Joseph Black and James Watt discovered that heat and, in particular, steam could be a source of power—I needn't describe how that has changed the world. In *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith invented the study of political economy, and created a social science that lasted up to the time of Karl Marx, and beyond. Hume, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, succeeded in proving that experience and reason have no necessary connection with one another. There is no such thing as a rational belief. Hume, as he himself said, was of an open, social and cheerful humour, and was much beloved by the ladies in the Paris salons. I suppose they had never read that small

book which has made all philosophers feel uneasy till the present day.

All these great Scotsmen lived in the grim, narrow tenements of the Old Town of Edinburgh, piled on the hill behind the castle. But in their lifetime two Scottish architects, the brothers Adam, had produced one of the finest pieces of town planning in Europe—the new town of Edinburgh. In addition they exploited, and I think one may almost say invented, the strict, pure classicism that was to influence architecture all over Europe—even in Russia, where another Scot named Cameron practised it in a spectacular manner. And then, a Scot having popularised neo-classicism, Sir Walter Scott popularised the Gothic Middle Ages and furnished the imagination of the romantically-minded for a century. Add to these James Boswell, who wrote one of the most permanently entertaining books in the English language; Robert Burns, the first great popular lyricist; and



9. Wright of Derby, *Experiment with an airpump*

Raeburn who painted the members of his remarkable society with an inspired directness—and one must admit that a survey of civilisation cannot omit Scotland. Through the practical genius of the Scots and English those technical diagrams in the Encyclopedia were superseded, and before the political revolutions of America and France had taken effect, a far deeper and more catastrophic transformation was already under way: what we call the Industrial Revolution.

If, on the practical side, the scene must change to Scotland, on the moral side we must return to France—not to Paris, but to the borders of Switzerland. For it was there, a mile or two from the frontier, that Voltaire had made his home. After several bad experiences, he had become suspicious of authority and liked to live in a place where he could slip out of reach. He did not suffer from his exile. He had made a lot of money by speculation, and his last commodious bolt-hole, the Château de Ferney, is a large agreeable country house. He planted a splendid avenue of chestnuts and a green tunnel of cut beeches, where he could take his constitutional on a hot day. It is said that when he was visited by the self-important ladies of Geneva he would receive them seated on a bench at the far end. It amused him to see how they struggled to prevent their mountains of fashionable hair from becoming entangled in the branches. I suppose the chestnuts have grown a good deal taller and the beech tunnel could not disturb the most towering *chevelure*; but most of Ferney has remained as Voltaire left it. In this agreeable setting he thought of the devastating witticisms with which he would destroy his enemies.

Voltaire is one of those writers whose virtue is inseparable from his style; and true style is untranslatable. He himself said: 'One word in the wrong place will ruin the most beautiful thought.' To quote from his writings in translation would ruin the wit and irony which was his peculiar gift. They still make one smile—the smile of reason; and to the end of his life Voltaire could not resist a joke. But on one subject he was completely serious—justice. Many people in his lifetime, and since, have compared him to a monkey. But when it came to fighting injustice he was a bull-dog. He never



let go. He pestered all his friends, he wrote an unending stream of pamphlets and finally he had some of the victims living at his expense at Ferney. Gradually the world ceased to think of him as an impudent libertine but considered him a patriarch and sage; and by 1778 he at last felt it safe to return to Paris. He was eighty-four. No victorious general, no lone flyer, has ever been given such a reception. He was hailed as the universal man and the friend of mankind. People of all classes crowded round his house, drew his carriage and mobbed him wherever he went. Finally, his bust was crowned on the stage of the Comédie Française. Naturally, it killed him, but he died triumphant.

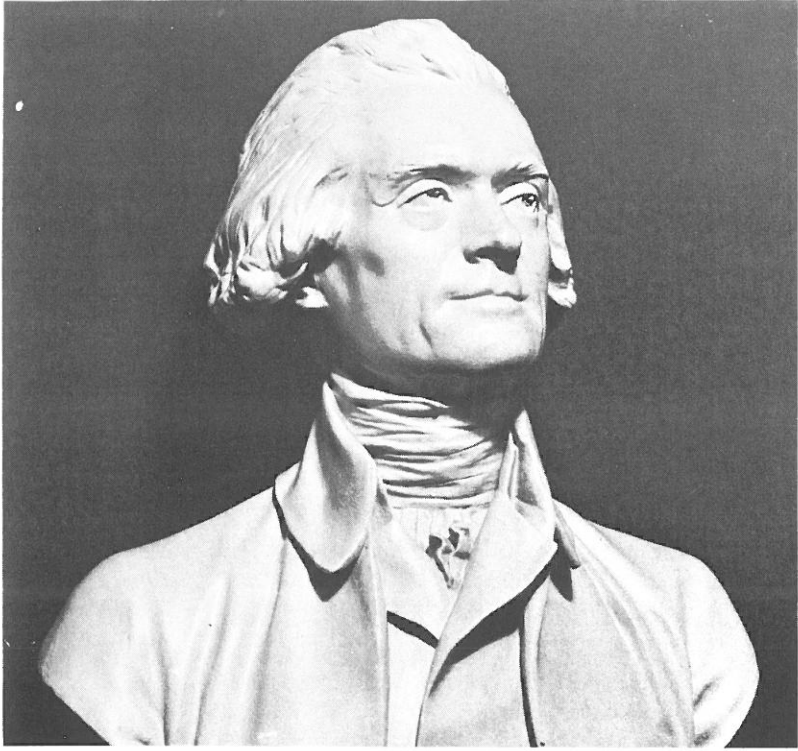
The remarkable thing about the frivolous eighteenth century was its seriousness. It was, in many ways, the heir to Renaissance humanism, but there was a vital difference. The Renaissance had taken place within the framework of the Christian Church. A few humanists had shown signs of scepticism, but no one had expressed any doubts about the Christian religion as a whole. People had the comfortable moral freedom that goes with an unquestioned faith. But by the middle of the eighteenth century serious-minded men could see that the Church had become a tied house—tied to property and status and defending its interests by repression and injustice. No one felt this more strongly than Voltaire. '*Ecrasez l'infâme*'—untranslatable! 'Crush the vermin', perhaps. It dominated his later life and he bequeathed it to his followers. I remember H. G. Wells, who was a kind of twentieth-century Voltaire, saying that he daren't drive a car in France, because the temptation to run over a priest would be too strong for him. All the same, Voltaire remained a kind of believer, whereas several of the contributors to the Encyclopedia were total materialists who thought that moral and intellectual qualities were due to an accidental conjunction of nerves and tissues. It was a courageous belief to hold in 1770, but it was not (and never will be) an easy one on which to found or maintain a civilisation. So the eighteenth century was faced with the troublesome task of constructing a new morality, without revelation or Christian sanctions.

This morality was built on two foundations: one of them was the

doctrine of natural law; the other was the stoic morality of ancient republican Rome. The concept of nature, and its great exponent, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, belongs in my next chapter, but one can't understand the new morality of the Enlightenment without reckoning with the belief that the simple goodness of natural man was superior to the artificial goodness of sophisticated man. The complement to this agreeable delusion was an ideal of virtue drawn, for the most part, from Plutarch. His *Parallel Lives* was almost as widely read in the eighteenth century as the *Roman de la Rose* had been in the fifteenth and had, through example, an equal influence on conduct. Those grim, puritanical heroes of the Roman republic, who sacrificed themselves and their families in the interests of the state, were taken as models for a new political order; and they were made more memorable by the pictorial imagination of the painter Jacques Louis David.

David was an exceptionally gifted painter. He could have made a fortune depicting the beautiful women and highly polished men of his time; but he chose to be a moralist. He said to his young pupil, Baron Gros: 'You love art too well to occupy yourself with frivolous subjects. Quick, quick, my friend, turn the pages of your Plutarch.' His first great programmatic picture was the *Oath of the Horatii* [10], painted in 1785. It created an effect which those of us who remember the first appearance of Picasso's *Guernica* may be able faintly to imagine. The *Oath of the Horatii* is the supreme picture of revolutionary action, not only in its subject, but in its treatment. Gone are all the melting outlines and pools of sensuous shadow of Fragonard, and in their place are firmly outlined expressions of will. The unified, totalitarian gesture of the brothers, like the kinetic image of a rotating wheel, has an almost hypnotic quality. Even the architecture is a conscious revolt against the refined, ornamental style of the time. The Tuscan columns, only recently rediscovered in the temple of Paestum, assert the superior virtue of the plain man. Two years later David painted an even more grimly Plutarchian picture, the lictors bringing back to the house of Brutus the bodies of his two sons whom he had condemned to death for treachery: one of those incidents in Roman history that do not appeal to





us but which were completely in harmony with French feeling on the eve of the Revolution, and help us to understand many incidents in the next five years. The *douceur de vivre* had lost its hold on European man some years before 1789. In fact the new morality had already inspired a revolution outside Europe.

Once more we must leave the ancient focus of civilisation, and look at a young, underpopulated country where civilised life still had the freshness of a new and precarious creation: America. Here on the border territory of the Indian, a young Virginian lawyer elected in the 1760s to build his home. His name was Thomas Jefferson [11] and he called his house Monticello, the little mountain. It must have been an extraordinary apparition in that wild landscape. Jefferson made it up out of the book of the

great Renaissance architect Palladio, of which he is said to have owned the only copy in America. But of course he had to invent a great deal of it himself, and he was highly inventive. Doors that open as one approaches them, a clock that tells the days of the week, a bed so placed that one gets out of it into either of two rooms, all this suggests the quirky ingenuity of a creative man working alone outside any accepted body of tradition.

But Jefferson wasn't a crank. He was the typical universal man of the eighteenth century, linguist, scientist, agriculturist, educator, town-planner and architect: almost a reincarnation of Leon Battista Alberti, even down to a love of music, the management of horses, and what, in a lesser man, one might have called a touch of self-righteousness. Jefferson wasn't as good an architect as Alberti, but then he was also President of the United States; and as an architect he was by no means bad. Monticello was the beginning of that simple, almost rustic, classicism that stretches right up the eastern seaboard of America, and lasted for one hundred years, pro-

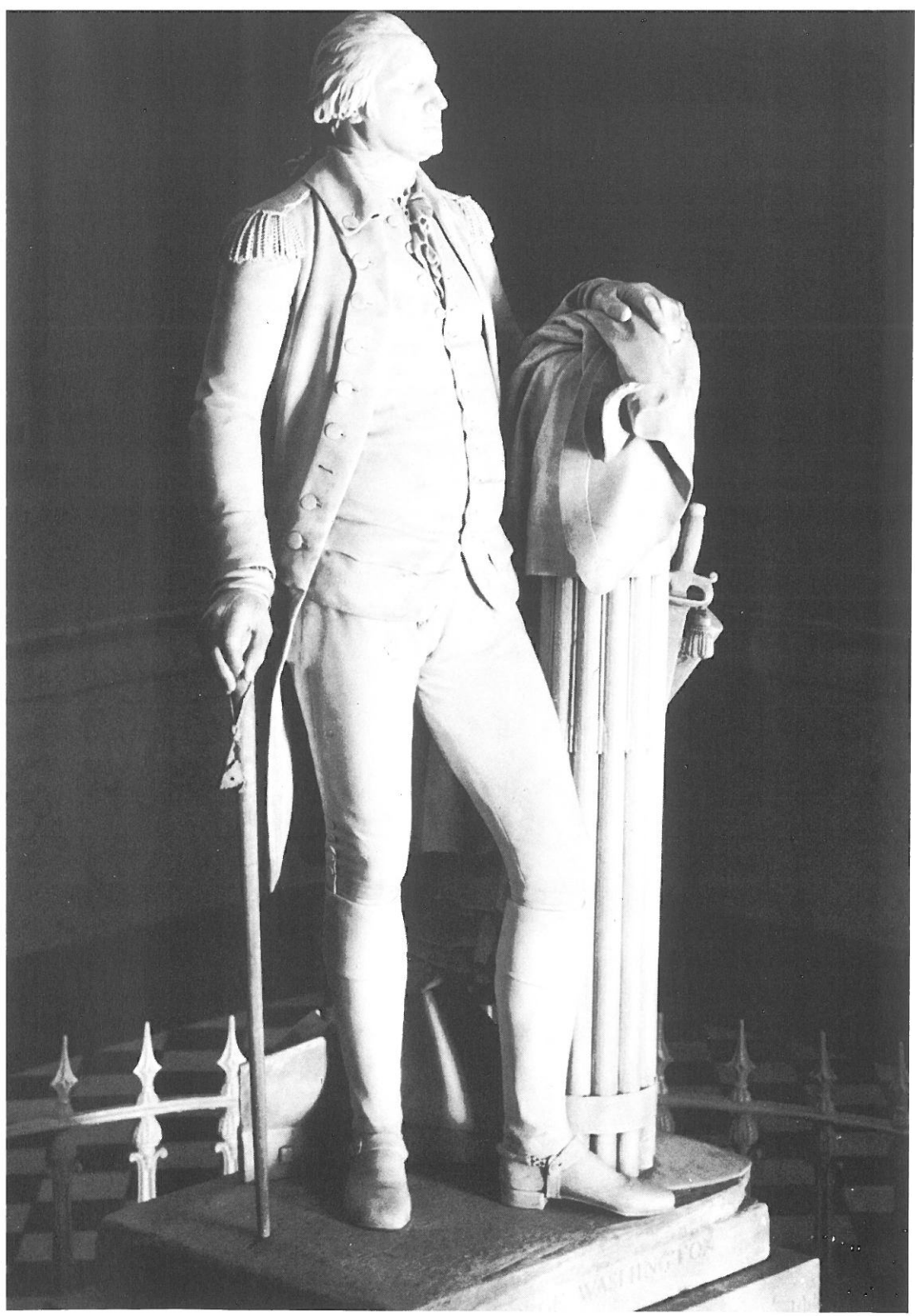


12. Jefferson, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville

ducing a body of civilised, domestic architecture equal to any in the world.

Jefferson is buried in the grounds of Monticello. He left instructions for his tomb. On it were to be inscribed the following sentences, 'and not a word more': 'Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia.' Nothing about being President; nothing about the Louisiana Purchase—the Jeffersonian pride and independence that has annoyed a large section of American opinion ever since. Well, the establishment of religious freedom that earned him so much hatred and abuse in his own day we now take for granted. But the University of Virginia [12] is still a surprise. It was all designed by Jefferson, and is full of his character. He called it an academical village. There are ten pavilions for ten professors, and between them, behind a colonnade, the rooms of the students, all within reach, and yet all individual: the ideal of corporate humanism. Then outside the courtyard are small gardens that show his love of privacy. They are enclosed by serpentine walls which were Jefferson's speciality. The serpentine form was an economy. It meant that the wall could be only one brick thick, without buttresses; but it also conformed to Hogarth's 'line of beauty'. The low, open lines of the academical village, the use of covered ways between the buildings, and the great trees in each small garden give this classic enclosure something of the character of a Japanese temple. Jefferson's romanticism is shown by the way in which he left the fourth side of his courtyard open, so that young scholars could look across to the mountains still inhabited by the Indians who had been his father's friends.

How confidently in their semi-wild domain the Founding Fathers of America assumed the mantle of republican virtue, and put into practice the notions of the French Enlightenment. They even called on the great sculptor of the Enlightenment, Houdon, to commemorate their victorious general. The resulting statue of Washington [13] stands in the Capitol at Richmond, Virginia, designed by Thomas Jefferson on the model of the *Maison Carrée* at Nîmes. This chapter began with Houdon's statue of Voltaire, smiling





the smile of reason; it could end with Houdon's statue of Washington. No more smiles. Houdon saw his subject as that favourite Roman republican hero, the decent country gentleman, called away from his farm to defend his neighbours' liberties; and, in moments of optimism, one may feel that, through all the vulgarity and corruption of American politics, some vestige of this first ideal has survived.

The capital city named after the first President is also the child, the overgrown and somewhat inarticulate child, of the French Enlightenment. It was laid out by a French engineer named l'Enfant, under the direction of Jefferson and is certainly the most grandiose piece of town planning since Sixtus V's Rome. The huge grassy spaces, the long straight avenues with their public buildings floating at the intersections like classical icebergs, unrelated, as it would seem, to the shops and houses that surround them, may seem to lack the essential vitality of America. But for the immigrants from the old world, with their countless differing traditions and ideas, a new myth had to be created. And this gives to the vast white monuments to Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson a moving quality that such pieces of masonry usually lack. Inside the Jefferson Memorial (the last to be built) are quotations from his writings. First the noble, indestructible words of the Declaration of Independence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men.' 'Self-evident truths' . . . that's the voice of eighteenth-century enlightenment. But on the opposite wall are less familiar words by Jefferson, that still give us pause today: 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free.' A peaceful-looking scene, a great ideal made visible. But beyond it what problems—almost insoluble, or at least not soluble by the smile of reason.