

# *Commerce, Culture, and Liberty*



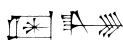
# Commerce, Culture, *and* Liberty

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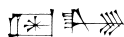
*Readings on Capitalism  
Before Adam Smith*

EDITED BY HENRY C. CLARK



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## *Foreword*

Although the modern world has been increasingly characterized by commercial culture, the interpretation of the scope, nature, and effects of exchange relations is as controversial today as it was when observers first described commercial society more than two centuries ago. The purpose of this anthology is to contribute to an understanding of the complexity of modern economic life by bringing together some of the most significant writing on its social, cultural, and political dimensions in the era when such writing first began.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even the most sophisticated students of economic life combined their analyses with moral and cultural considerations more often than is usually the case in today's specialized intellectual environment. Among the topics discussed then, but in ways that have since often been forgotten, are the nature of exchange relations and their effects on a traditional and hierarchical social order, the role of commerce in fostering civility and sociability, the effects of commerce on the fabric of community life, the dangers to moral virtue posed by increasing prosperity, the impact of commerce on sex roles and the condition of women, and the complex interplay between commerce and civil or political liberty.

This anthology evokes the breadth and depth of consideration of these issues in the early modern period in two ways: first, by bringing together writings by well-known authors from a variety of historical sources and literary genres that are scattered and sometimes difficult to access; second, by bringing to light materials from less well-known sources that were influential at the time or significantly reflective of

contemporary opinion in the several generations before the effect of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) began to be felt.

The terms in the title and subtitle should be explained. The word "commerce" had a resonance in the eighteenth century, and especially the seventeenth century, somewhat different from what it has today. There was a sense in which its primary usage concerned social relations—as, for example, in common phrases such as the "commerce of the sexes" and the "commerce of self-love." The economic dimension often appeared as a metaphor for, or as a part of, the larger whole. (It was partly to illustrate this feature that the Nicole reading was chosen.) In the eighteenth century, on the other hand, a quite different linguistic transfer begins to emerge. As commerce comes to assume a larger place both in the reality of European life and in the imaginations of its best-informed observers, commerce becomes something of a synecdoche for the economy as a whole—a tendency that is especially clear in the Vincent de Gournay reading and to a lesser extent in Abbé Saint-Pierre. In the Scottish tradition of the four-stages theory of historical evolution, represented here by John Millar of Glasgow and by William Robertson, "commerce" comes almost to stand for the modern era in all its facets.

As to "culture," what is meant is evidently not the formal works of art or music often associated with that term, but rather the anthropologist's wider notion of a system of symbols embodying the shared or contested values of any society—the full range of resources a society draws on to lift itself above the status of mere nature. The question arose of how to fit a growing commitment to commerce as a public good into a social order that continued to be largely defined by other values. Some of the most contentious arguments over commerce concerned apprehensions about the broader culture that have simply disappeared from our view. Coyer's *La Noblesse commerçante* (1756), translated and excerpted in this volume for the first time, had an immediacy and a resonance for his contemporaries far beyond the level of sophistication contained in the purely economic analysis that underlay it. Similar points could be made about the readings from other authors such as Pluche, Galiani (especially his analysis of value in *Della moneta*) and the entries in the *Spectator*. Comments about the correlation between religion and economic life are interspersed throughout the writings of many of our authors.

Finally, we come to “liberty.” The close connection between the growth of commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the spread of liberty, as an idea and as a reality, has often been observed. Adam Smith, after all, frequently called his ideal economic arrangement a “natural system of liberty.” Other writers in the “liberal” tradition, such as Benjamin Constant, detected a “modern” species of liberty appropriate to commercial society and clearly distinct from an “ancient” version that was not. A central purpose of this anthology, therefore, is to flesh out some of the specific ways in which this association between economic liberty and liberty in general came into being.

But again, the theme of liberty was a multifaceted one in the writings of the period. While many authors saw a mutually supportive relationship between the growth of commerce and the spread of liberty (de la Court, Trenchard and Gordon in their *Cato's Letters*, and Hazeland make the connection explicit even in their titles), there were various ways of construing “liberty” in its relation to commercial society. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Brown (and perhaps the later Galiani) were among many late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century observers who saw the spread of commerce as contributing to a loss of a certain kind of liberty, and their perspective is deliberately well represented in this volume. In addition, there is the question whether an absolute monarchy was less conducive to commercial liberty than a republic. De la Court, Trenchard, and Gordon were among those who certainly thought so, but Law makes an important and not unrepresentative case that the French monarchy, at least, was more likely to guarantee the conditions of flourishing commerce than its competitors. It was the arch-mercantilist Colbert, after all, who famously asserted that “liberty is the soul of commerce.” The question, then, was problematic in ways that may surprise some twenty-first-century readers.

If some of the readings contained in this anthology evoke an alien thought world, there are many others likely to bring the reader a shock of recognition. The eighteenth-century complaints about a new philosophy of “self-interest” associated with Mandeville, Hume, and others are redolent of more recent debates about the role of private good in contributing to (or detracting from) the public good. The century-long debate over luxury (see Melon, Voltaire, Brown, and Saint-Lambert for

examples) evokes, and puts in perspective, later arguments over everything from the redistributive effects of a market economy to the corrupting influence of a supposed “decade of greed.” Does market morality have a liberating or a dehumanizing effect on the condition of women? *The Spectator*, Hume, Galiani (*On Money*), Gournay, Turgot (*Reflections*), and Millar are among those who already had things to say about the question. Is the spread of capitalism conducive to political liberty, as observers of South Korea, the Philippines, and (most important) China have claimed or hoped? De la Court, Hazeland, and *Cato’s Letters* have been there before us—in ways similar enough to be revealing and different enough to be intriguing.

The collection is also notable for the textured continuity that emerges in the passage through the texts. So diffuse and open-ended are the authorial references one to another, and so little are they dominated by a single voice, a single doctrine, or a single tendency of thought, that it is no exaggeration to call their authors participants in a conversation—an extended and continuing one that picks up intensity as the eighteenth century unfolds. Sometimes the exchanges could be pointed and focused: Mandeville was directly and immediately rebutted by Blewhitt (although not definitively, as Mandeville remained a general presence in the conversation for the remainder of the century). Voltaire seems to have been inspired to intervene on commercial topics only somewhat less directly by his reading of Melon’s essay (Melon in turn was a protégé of John Law, who learned much of what he knew about finance by studying the Dutch scene). Rousseau’s critique of Hume is thinly veiled, Saint-Lambert’s embrace of Hume lightly wrought. Montesquieu, though not normally viewed as an economist, had a huge impact. His distinction between an “economy of necessity” and an “economy of luxury” was picked up by many writers (cf. Hazeland, ch. 26, and Coyer, ch. 27), and a single comment of his on the propriety of noble commerce (bk. 20; see ch. 20) unleashed a flood of pamphlets (see Brown, ch. 28, and Coyer, ch. 27). The eighteenth-century Frenchman Gournay translated the seventeenth-century Englishman Josiah Child; his protégé Turgot then cited Child and the Dutchman de la Court as the two founding fathers of modern economic theory. In 1768, the Physiocrats were at the height of their influence, and Du Pont de Nemours proudly summarized their achieve-

ment. By 1769, Galiani could strike a responsive chord with a hilarious attack upon them. There is no orchestrated or preordained end to such a polyphonic colloquy. No End of History was sensed or articulated by the authors who were grappling with these novel, confusing, indisputably significant matters during the period covered in this volume.

To my knowledge, there is no remotely comparable precedent to what has been attempted here. In the nineteenth century, there were both French and English (and perhaps other) collections of early works on political economy. These anthologies consisted of small numbers of sometimes lengthy and unabridged works deemed to be forerunners of the science of political economy. J. R. McCullough, for example, produced an anthology of eight seventeenth-century tracts—all of them English, and all complete texts—for the Political Economy Club of London (of which he was a member) in 1856. His chief criterion for selection, aside from the work's rarity, was a frankly teleological search for anticipations of “those liberal commercial principles now so generally diffused.”<sup>1</sup> Similar observations could be made about other works, such as Eugène Daire's collection, *Economistes financiers du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1843), which was part of the *Collection des principaux économistes* series by the same publisher. The present volume, however, is less about disciplines than about discourses; the purpose is to convey some of the ways in which contemporaries proceeded to think and write about the “new economy” they were observing.

The present anthology cannot, of course, pretend to be comprehensive. Although there were significant discussions of commercial society by Italian, German, and Dutch writers, among others, this anthology contains almost exclusively works written in English or French. In addition, although there were many interesting discussions of trade and the tradesman in Renaissance Italy and in the sixteenth century, the present work focuses on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Within such limits, however, this volume aims to provide a broadly representative sample of what informed and articulate Europeans were thinking about commerce and commercial society in the century and a half before Adam Smith.

1. J. R. McCulloch, ed., *Early English Tracts on Commerce* (London: Political Economy Club, 1856; reprint, Cambridge, 1952), iii.

The anthology consists of writings by thirty-three authors. Of these, ten were English, thirteen French, five Scottish, two Dutch, and one each were Swiss, Irish, and Italian. As to family background, seven of the authors were born into nobility (North, Fletcher, Saint-Pierre, Hume, Montesquieu, Turgot, and Saint-Lambert), fifteen into what might be described as professional families (de la Court, Nicole, Steele, Law, Trenchard, Mandeville, Melon, Voltaire, Fielding, Brown, Robertson, Galiani, Millar, and Condillac), and seven into the trades (Walwyn, Child, Defoe, Barbon, Gournay, Rousseau, and Du Pont de Nemours). These categories are of course fluid and more than a little arbitrary. Under “professions,” for example, I count clerical positions and government officials as well as traditional fields such as law and medicine. “Nobility” includes the meager landed estates of Hume and Saint-Lambert, as well as the august titles of Turgot. By “trades,” I mean to include well-to-do exporters such as the Gournay and Child families, as well as the more artisanal backgrounds of Walwyn or Barbon. In addition, it has not proved possible to know with certainty the family backgrounds of all the authors represented here. What binds all our writers together, not surprisingly, is that they hail from the reading classes; there are no sons of illiterate peasants to be found here.

As to the occupations pursued by our thirty-three writers, what is noteworthy is that in the age before the academic discipline of economics developed, significant contributions could be made by persons from a wide variety of careers, mostly of a nonacademic nature. Here, the trades, including commerce and finance, count seven authors (Walwyn, Child, de la Court, North, Law, Gournay, and Barbon after he discontinued his medical practice). The professions account for six more (Mandeville, Montesquieu, Hazeland, Brown, Robertson, and Millar). What might be called the life of private or public service, mainly for noble families or governments, is mostly responsible for six others (Saint-Pierre, Melon, Pluche, Galiani, Turgot, and Condillac). Recognizably noble lives were led by two others (Fletcher and Saint-Lambert), and ten authors are probably best described as men of letters (Steele, Trenchard, Defoe, Voltaire, Hume, Fielding, Coyer, Rousseau, Du Pont de Nemours, and Raynal), with all the uncertainties, anxieties, and ambiguities that that designation often entailed. These categories are even more overlapping

and inconclusive than those for family background. Saint-Lambert, for example, abandoned his military career at age forty-two and spent the remainder of his days as a man of letters. Montesquieu began his career in the law but ended it as a writer. Fielding followed something of the opposite trajectory, beginning as a playwright and becoming a magistrate. Several authors straddled the fence between a life of letters and government connections (Du Pont de Nemours and Raynal, among others). Only a very few of our authors were primarily academics, and they tended to be the Scots (Millar and Robertson), a useful reminder of the importance of the university in the Scottish Enlightenment.

There was no necessary connection, of course, between the background or occupation of an author and the content of his writing. The nobleman Fletcher attacked the modern system of commercial liberty; the nobleman Saint-Lambert defended it. The artisan Walwyn promoted free trade; the financial wizard John Law praised absolute monarchy. The young Galiani seemed in *On Money* to be friendly to an extended marketplace; the older Galiani of the *Dialogues* attacked at least the Physiocrats' version of free trade in grain. (Is there a Galiani Problem, then, to go along with the Adam Smith Problem?) The complex and vigorous play of ideas transcended, then as now, the bare biographies of those who fashioned them.

The principles of selection for this volume have proven to be multiple, overlapping, and difficult to harmonize. First, because of the thematic considerations cited above, technical works of economic analysis have for the most part been avoided. Thus, treatises that might be of great interest to twenty-first-century historians of economic thought—such as Quesnay's *Tableau économique* (1759) and other works by the Physiocrats—have not been well represented in this collection. Second, there is the obscurity factor: A principal purpose of the volume has been to bring to light works that were better known in their time than they have since become. Partly, this decision has arisen from the general conviction that a familiarity with more than merely a few enduringly famous authors was in the interests of both historical and philosophical understanding. Partly, it derives from the more specific judgment that there were many writings from the period before Adam Smith that have noteworthy things to say about commercial society and economic life, and that

readers who are interested in Adam Smith or his successors might well be interested in some of his predecessors. But third, an effort was also made to choose works that either were influential and well regarded in their own time or are meaningfully illustrative of contemporary opinion. Brown's *Estimate* and Coyer's *La Noblesse commerçante* (both published in 1756) caused quite a stir in their own time, no matter how thoroughly they may have been forgotten since then.

Within these thematic constraints, there are other principles of selection. A concerted effort has been made to minimize editorial intrusion so as to permit readers to judge for themselves the significance of the texts. This was done, in the first instance, by reproducing complete texts wherever possible. Fifteen of the readings offered here are full and unabridged texts: Walwyn, Barbon, North, Fletcher, Law, Voltaire (three separate pieces, each complete), Hume, Gournay, Hazeland, Rousseau, Turgot ("In Praise of Gournay"), Saint-Lambert, and Du Pont de Nemours. Another four are integral and free-standing texts within larger works: Child, Mandeville, the *Spectator* entries, and the *Cato's Letters* entry. Nine other readings are complete chapters or divisions, single or multiple, within larger works: de la Court, Blewhitt, Defoe, Melon, Pluche, Montesquieu, Galiani (*On Money*), Brown, and Raynal. The chief cost of cleaving so closely to a full-text bias in editorial selection is that readers will occasionally find that a text runs on beyond useful or interesting limits, or that it buries its jewels of novelty and insight inconspicuously in the middle or at the end. This was thought to be a cost worth paying in the interest of retaining maximum textual fidelity.

There were, however, some texts and/or authors that seemed so important to the purposes of the collection as to merit risking the charge of editorial intrusiveness in including them, even though it was not possible to present either full texts or clearly defined portions of text. These were Nicole, Saint-Pierre, Fielding, Coyer, Robertson, Turgot (*Reflections*), Galiani (*Dialogues*), Millar, and Condillac. While a good-faith effort has been made to avoid taking these texts out of context, and while some effort has been made to situate the excerpt within its larger work, the only way to be fair to any of these authors, it goes without saying, is to read them whole.



The Adam Smith reference point in the subtitle does not, of course, escape the charge of arbitrariness. There were many obscure and interesting writings after 1776 just as there were before. Nor is there anything overtly teleological about the selections contained here. An author was neither more nor less likely to be included by virtue of having exerted an influence on *The Wealth of Nations*. It simply seemed that 1776 was a convenient terminal point because of the significant ways in which political economy, and the broader discussion of commercial society, evolved after the publication of that sprawling masterwork, and because of how much better known its story is after 1776 than before.

Henry C. Clark  
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## *Editor's Note*

Some of the following readings are borrowed from modern scholarly editions. These include the works by Walwyn, Fletcher, Mandeville, the *Spectator*, *Cato's Letters*, Hume, Montesquieu, Fielding, Gournay, Rousseau, Turgot, Robertson, Galiani, Millar, and Condillac. In these cases, most of the scholarly apparatus of the respective editors has been retained, widely variable though they are. In a few cases, I have been obliged to use earlier editions that contain less full editorial apparatus. These include the works of Barbon, North, Law, and Voltaire. For the most part, I have maintained those editions intact with minimal changes, though with occasional explanatory notes and glossary help indicated by the use of brackets. Finally, there are some works reproduced here that come directly from original or near-original editions and that are virtually lacking in editorial apparatus. De la Court, Child, Nicole, Defoe, Saint-Pierre, Pluche, Melon, Hazeland, Coyer, Brown, Saint-Lambert, Du Pont de Nemours, and Raynal fall in this category. Here, though I have refrained from attempting the full-scale historical-critical apparatus one will find, for example, in the Fielding excerpt below, I offer at least some basic identifications and annotations to assist in understanding the authors' arguments.

Unless otherwise indicated, the footnotes are by the original author and this editor's notes will appear in brackets. Where convenient, archaic or foreign terms are clarified in brackets within the text or in footnotes; when they appear more than once, they are usually relegated to the Glossary and indicated by a degree sign. For linguistic help, I have drawn

mainly on Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1818–19); Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, 2nd ed. (Rotterdam, 1702; orig. pub. 1690); and *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris: Coignard, 1694).

## *Translator's Note*

About a quarter of the texts contained herein consist of original translations from the French. These include Pierre Nicole, *Essais de morale*; John Law, "Idée générale du nouveau système des finances"; Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *Projet pour perfectionner le Commerce*; Noël-Antoine Pluche, *Spectacle de la nature*; Vincent de Gournay, "Mémoire"; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Le Luxe, le commerce et les arts"; Gabriel François Coyer, *La noblesse commerçante*; Jean-François Saint-Lambert, "Luxe," in *Encyclopédie*; Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, *De l'Origine et progrès d'une science nouvelle*; and Ferdinando Galiani, *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds*. These translations are the joint effort of the editor and of Pauline Collombier of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris. Although different texts posed different problems—the government memorandum of a Law or a Gournay is obviously a very different literary production from the dialogues of Galiani—our general aim has been to render the substance of the author's meaning as faithfully as possible, with a minimum of interpretive interjection. Where terms proved difficult to translate into English, we have usually supplied the original in brackets and sometimes provided a glossary entry at the back of the volume, especially if the term was used frequently.



## *Acknowledgments*

Many scholars from diverse fields have responded to my inquiries over the years, among whom I am pleased to thank Garry Apgar, Karen Bloom, Grant Campbell, Noel Chevalier, John Dussinger, Hans Eicholz, David R. Evans, Peter Galie, James E. Gill, Daniel Gordon, M. M. Goldsmith, Thomas Kaiser, Cynthia J. Koepp, Dorothy M. Medlin, Benoit Melancon, George Mosley, Jerry Z. Muller, Hans Rudolf Nollert, Irwin Primer, Salim Rashid, Jane Rendall, Elaine Riehm, and Silvia Sebastiani. They, of course, bear no responsibility for the use I have made of their advice.

Closer to home, David Coffta and Thomas M. Banchich of the Classics Department of Canisius College helped with some of the Latin and Greek translations, Dena Bowman of the History Department office performed innumerable copying and collating tasks, and my research assistant Robert Martin did yeoman service in the compiling of the seed list for the index. The staffs of many libraries offered courteous and efficient service; in particular, the reference staffs and interlibrary loan services at Canisius College and Dartmouth College were both very helpful over a long span of years. Any blunders and deficiencies that remain are entirely my own.





# *Commerce, Culture, and Liberty*





*Political Maxims of the State  
of Holland*  
1662

PIETER DE LA COURT came from a family that was close to republican circles in Holland. A cloth manufacturer himself, Pieter's grandfather Jacques had a medallion struck with the insignia "Long live liberty!" upon the death of the *stadholder* William II in 1650, though Pieter's own writings on the subject are somewhat more complex and nuanced in their orientation. His *Interest van Holland* (*The Interests of Holland*) was mostly completed by 1661. After consulting with Jan de Witt, who suggested a few changes, de la Court brought the book out in Dutch in 1662. It was an immediate bestseller, widely read and discussed, but also highly controversial. For the better part of a decade, the author and his book were subject to disciplinary procedures by church and state. De la Court attempted to balance his political interests with his writer's interest until 1672, at which point the return of the Princes of Orange to power made his republican political ambitions moot. De la Court died in 1685.

The excerpts presented here are from *Political Maxims of the State of Holland*, translated by John Campbell (Nourse, 1743), part 1, chapters 1, 9, 14, 15, and 16, and are derived from the revised and expanded 1669 edition of the *Interest van Holland*, which bore the title *Aanwysing der heilsame politike gronden en maximen van de republike van Holland*, from which the English title is taken. This selection is meant to provide a cross-section of the ways in which the author connected commercial

considerations with political and religious ones. Unbracketed notes are adapted from the English edition; material in brackets is by the current editor.

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*The TRUE INTEREST, and  
POLITICAL MAXIMS of  
the Republick of Holland  
and West-Friesland.*

Chapter I

*Wherein are laid down the general political maxims which tend to the prosperity of all countries: and some reasons to make it evident, that the same do aptly agree to Holland and West-Friesland.*

That we may not abruptly speak of the true interest and political maxims of *Holland* and *West-Friesland*, nor yet surprize the reader with unknown matters, I judge it necessary to begin with a general discourse of the universal and true political maxims of all countries: that the reader being enlightened by such reasoning, may the better comprehend the true political maxims of *Holland* and *West-Friesland*. And seeing that almost all the people in *Europe*, as the *Spaniards*, *Italians*, *French*, &c. do express the same by the word *interest*, I shall often have occasion to use the same likewise here for brevity sake, in the same sense that they do; *viz.* seeing the true interest of all countries consists in the joint welfare of the governors and governed; and the same is known to depend on a good government, that being the true foundation whereon all the prosperity of any country is built; we are therefore to know, that a good government is not that where the well or ill-being of the subjects depends on the virtues

or vices of the rulers; but (which is worthy of observation) where the well or ill-being of the rulers necessarily follows or depends on the well or ill-being of the subjects. For seeing we must believe that in all societies or assemblies of men, self is always preferred; so all sovereigns or supreme powers will in the first place seek their own advantage in all things, tho' to the prejudice of the subject. But seeing on the other hand true interest cannot be compassed by a government, unless the generality of the people partake thereof; therefore the publick welfare will ever be aimed at by good rulers. All which very aptly agrees with our *Latin* and *Dutch* proverb, that, *Tantum de publicis malis sentimus, quantum ad privatas res pertinet*; i. e. We are only sensible of publick afflictions, in so far as they touch our private affairs; for no body halts of another man's sore.

Whereby it clearly follows, that all wise men, whether monarchs, princes, sovereign lords, or rulers of republicks, are always inclined so to strengthen their country, kingdom, or city, that they may defend themselves against the power of any stronger neighbour. The rulers welfare therefore does so far necessarily depend on the welfare of the subject; else they would soon be conquer'd by stronger neighbouring princes, and be turn'd out of their government. Those monarchs and supreme powers, who by bad education, and great prosperity, follow their pleasures, suffer their government to fall into the hands of favourites and courtiers, and do commonly neglect this first duty; the said favourites in the mean time finding themselves vested with such sovereign power, do for the most part rule to the benefit of themselves, and to the prejudice, not only of such voluptuous and unwary chief magistrates, but also of their subjects; and by consequence to the weakning of the political state; so that we have often seen revolutions of such monarchies by the ill government of favourites. But such princes as are wise, and do not entrust their power in other mens hands, will not omit to strengthen their dominions against their neighbours as much as possible. But when monarchies, or republicks are able enough to do this, and have nothing to fear from their neighbouring states or potentates, then they do usually, according to the opportunity put into their hands by the form of their government, take courses quite contrary to the welfare of the subject.

For then it follows as truly from the said general maxims of all rulers, that the next duty of monarchs, and supreme magistrates, is to take special

care that their subjects may not be like generous and metalsome<sup>1</sup> horses, which, when they cannot be commanded by the rider, but are too head-strong, wanton, and powerful for their master, they reduce and keep so tame and manageable, as not to refuse the bit and bridle, I mean taxes and obedience.<sup>2</sup> For which end it is highly necessary to prevent the greatness and power of their cities, that they may not out of their own wealth be able to raise and maintain an army in the field, not only to repel all foreign power, but also to make head against their own lord, or expel him. And as little, yea much less may prudent sovereign lords or monarchs permit that their cities, by their strong fortifications, and training their inhabitants to arms, should have an opportunity easily, if they pleas'd, to discharge and turn off their sovereign. Bot if herein a sovereign had neglected his duty, there's no way left for him, but to wait an opportunity to command such populous cities and strongholds by citadels, and to render them weak and defenceless. And tho' *Aristotle* says, that it very well suits an oligarchical state to have their cities under command of a castle, yet this is only true of a great and populous city, that hath a prince over it, and not of a city that governs itself, or hath a share in the supreme government; for in such a republick, the governor of that citadel would certainly be able to make himself master of that city, and to subjugate or overtop his rulers.<sup>3</sup> And we see that this reason is so strong and clear, and confirm'd by experience, that the history of all former ages, as well as the age we live in, teach us, that the rulers of republicks, whatever they are, have wisely forborn erecting citadels, and do still continue to do so. So that it appears that the said maxim tending to the overthrow of great and populous cities, may be attributed to monarchs and princes at all times, but never to republicks, unless when they have inconsiderately subdued great cities; and tho' not willing to demolish them, yet are willing to keep them distinct from the sovereign government. But if the inconsiderate reader be so far preposess'd in favour of monarchy and against common freedom, that he neither can nor will submit himself to this way of reasoning, nor to the venerable and antient lessons of old and renowned philosophers, then let him

1. [Mettlesome; spirited, courageous.]

2. Arist[otle], *Polit[ics]* l. 5, c. 11.

3. Ibid., l. 7, c. 11.

know, that the christian and invincible monarch *Justinian* has for ever established the said monarchical maxim by form of law in the *corpus juris*, now become the common law-book of all civiliz'd people, and especially of Christians.<sup>4</sup>

For the said emperor having by his captain general of the east, *Belisarius*, reconquer'd from the *Goths* that part of *Africa* which he had formerly lost, and brought it under his subjection, gave him no order that the inhabitants of great cities should be better disciplin'd and provided with arms, or strengthened by good walls, that they might jointly with ease defend themselves, and their great and populous cities, against the assaults of those barbarous people: but on the contrary, he commands the said captain general *Belisarius* (and consequently, according to the *Roman* laws, all his other governors of provinces) to make such provision, that no city or strong hold lying on the frontiers be so great as it could not be well kept; but in such cases so to order them to be built, that they may be well defended with few soldiers, and particularly such as were in pay, and depended only on the emperor of *Rome*.

And tho' weak, voluptuous, dull and sluggish monarchs neglect all these things, yet will not the courtiers who govern in their stead, neglect to seek themselves, and to fill their coffers whether in war or in peace: and thus the subjects estates being exhausted by rapine, those great and flourishing cities become poor and weak. And to the end that the subject should not be able to hinder or prevent such rapine, or revenge themselves, those favourites omit no opportunities to divest those populous cities of all fortifications, provision, ammunition of war, and to hinder the exercising of the commonalty in the use of arms. Since it appears from the said maxims, that the publick is not regarded but for the sake of private interest; and consequently, that is the best government, where the chief rulers may obtain their own welfare by that of the people. It follows then to be the duty of the governours of republicks to seek for great cities, and to make them as populous and strong as possible, that so all

4. Belisario magistro militum per orientem, &c. Interea vero si aliquas civitates seu Castella per limites constituta providerit tua magnitudo nimiae esse magnitudinis, & propter hoc non posse bene custodiri ad talem modum ea construi disponat, ut possint per paucos bene servari, &c. Cod. l. i. Tit. 27. par. 14.

rulers and magistrates, and likewise all others that serve the publick either in country or city, may thereby gain the more power, honour and benefit, and more safely possess it, whether in peace or war:<sup>5</sup> and this is the reason why commonly we see that all republicks thrive and flourish far more in arts, manufacture, traffick, populousness and strength, than the dominions and cities of monarchs:<sup>6</sup> for where there is liberty, there will be riches and people.

To bring all this home, and make it suit with our state, we ought to consider that *Holland* may easily be defended against her neighbours; and that the flourishing of manufactures, fishing, navigation, and traffick, whereby that province subsists, and (its natural necessities or wants being well considered) depends perpetually on them, else would be uninhabited: I say, the flourishing of those things will infallibly produce great, strong, populous and wealthy cities, which by reason of their convenient situation, may be impreguably fortified: all which to a monarch, or one supreme head, is altogether intolerable. And therefore I conclude, that the inhabitants of *Holland*, whether rulers or subjects, can receive no greater mischief in their polity, than to be governed by a monarch, or supreme lord: and that on the other side, God can give no greater temporal blessing to a country in our condition, than to introduce and preserve a free commonwealth government.

But seeing this conclusion opposeth the general and long-continued prejudices of all ignorant persons, and consequently of most of the inhabitants of these *United Provinces*, and that some of my readers might distaste this treatise upon what I have already said, unless somewhat were spoken to obviate their mistakes, I shall therefore offer them these reasons.

Altho' by what hath been already said, it appears, That the inhabitants of a republick are infinitely more happy than subjects of a land governed by one supreme head; yet the contrary is always thought in a country where a prince is already reigning, or in republicks, where one supreme head is ready to be accepted.

For not only officers, courtiers, idle gentry, and soldiery, but also all those that would be such, knowing, that under the worst government

5. Arist[otle], *Pol[itics]*, l. 7, c. II, l. 5, c. II.

6. *Quippe ubi libertas, ibi & populus & divitiae.*



they use to fare best, because they hope that with impunity they may plunder and rifle the citizens and country people, and so by the corruption of the government enrich themselves, or attain to grandeur, they cry up monarchical government for their private interest to the very heavens: altho God did at first mercifully institute no other but a commonwealth government, and afterwards in his wrath appointed one sovereign over them.<sup>7</sup> Yet for all this, those blood-suckers of the state, and, indeed of mankind, dare to speak of republicks with the utmost contempt, make a mountain of every molehill, discourse of the defects of them at large, and conceal all that is good in them, because they know none will punish them for what they say: wherefore all the rabble (according to the old <sup>8</sup>*Latin* verse) being void of knowledge and judgment, and therefore inclining to the weather or safer side, and mightily valuing the vain and empty pomp of kings and princes, say *amen* to it; especially when kept in ignorance, and irritated against the lawful government by preachers, who aim at dominion, or would introduce an independent and arbitrary power of church-government; and such (God amend it) are found in *Holland*, and the other *United Provinces*, insomuch, that all vertuous and intelligent people have been necessitated to keep silence, and to beware of disclosing the vices of their princes, or of such as would willingly be their governors, or of courtiers and rude military men, and such ambitious and ungovernable preachers as despise God, and their native country.<sup>9</sup>

Nay there are few inhabitants of a perfect free state to be found, that are inclinable to instruct and teach others, how much better a republick is than a monarchy, or one supreme head, because they know no body will reward them for it; and that on the other side,<sup>10</sup> kings, princes, and great men are so dangerous to be conversed with, that even their friends can scarcely talk with them of the wind and weather, but at the hazard of

7. 1 Sam[uel] 1:8, 12.

8. ——— *Sed quid? / Turba Remi sequitur fortunam, ut semper, & odit damnatos.* Juven. [And what does the mob of Remus say? It follows fortune, as it always does, and rails against the condemned. *Juvenal and Perseus*, trans. G. G. Ramsay (Harvard University Press: Loeb Library, 1918), Satire 10. 73–74.]

9. [Since the death of Stadholder William II in 1650, the Dutch states had been left without a Stadholder and had been dominated by Holland and its councilor pensionary, Jan de Witt, who was thought to have collaborated with de la Court on the present work.]

10. ——— *Sed quid violentius aure tyranni, / Cum quo de pluviis aut aestibus aut nim-boso / Vere locuturi fatum pendebat amici?* Juven. [Satire 4. 86–88]

their lives; and kings with their long arms can give heavy blows. And altho' all intelligent and ingenuous subjects of monarchs, who have not, with lying sycophantical courtiers, cast off all shame, are generally by these reasons, and daily experience, fully convinced of the excellency of a republick above a monarchical government; yet nevertheless, many vertuous persons, lovers of monarchy, do plausibly maintain, that several nations are of that temper and disposition, that they cannot be happily governed but by a single person, and quote for this the examples of all the people in *Asia* and *Africa*, as well as *Europe*, that lie southerly. They do also alledge, that all the people who lie more northerly, are more fit to be governed by a single person, and with more freedom; as from *France* to the northward, all absolute monarchical government ceaseth; and therefore maintain or assert, with such ignorant persons as I mentioned before, that the *Hollanders* in particular are so turbulent, factious, and disingenuous, that they cannot be kept in awe, and happily governed, but by a single person; and that the histories of the former reigns or government by earls, will sufficiently confirm it.

But on the other side, the patriots, and lovers of a free-state will say, that the foregoing government by earls is well know[n] to have been very wretched and horrid, their reigns filling history with continual wars, tumults, and detestable actions, occasioned by that single person. And that on the contrary, the *Hollanders*, subsisting by manufactures, fishing, navigation, and commerce, are naturally very peaceable, if by such a supreme head they were not excited to tumults. Whether this be so or not, may be learned and confirmed too in part from those histories.<sup>11</sup>

But here it may be said, that things are much altered within these 100 years last; for *Holland* then subsisted mostly by agriculture, and there were then no soldiery, treasure, or fortified places to be at the earl's disposal. But when he had wars, it was with the help of his homagers and tenants, only subsidies or money being given him at his request by the states of the country: And moreover, the cities of *Holland*, and castles of the nobility were (according to the then method of war) so strong, that they could not be taken by the said earls, without great forces employed against them; so

11. *Deduct[ie oft declaratie van de staaten van Holland . . . (s Gravenhage, 1654)]* Part 2, ch. 3, 4, 7, 13.

that the states of *Holland* in their assemblies, have boldly contended for their rights against the earl's encroachments. Therefore these earls, on the other side, by reason of their dignity, had many adherents that depended on them, which must needs make that government by earls every way unsteady, weak and tumultuous.

To this an approver of monarchical government may further add, that *Holland* now wholly subsists by traffick, and that one supreme head, captain-general, or stadtholder, would have his own life-guards at the *Hague*, the place of assembly, and likewise the assistance of a great and well-paid army, and of all the preachers, and by them the love of the whole populace; and that at his pleasure he may dispose of all the impregnable frontier towns of those provinces that have no suffrages or voices in the state, tho' he should not increase his strength by any foreign alliances, or by collusion and flattery with the deputies of the other provinces of the generality; insomuch that the states of *Holland* would not dare, no not in their assemblies, to open their mouths against the interest of such a supreme head, or if they did, he would order his souldiers to take them by the collar, and might easily overpower most of the cities of *Holland*, the people being unaccustomed to arms, and moreover divided, fortifications but slight and mean in comparison of the present way of fortifying: so that one may truly say, that the *Hollanders* by setting up one supreme head over themselves, may now with ease, and without tumult, be govern'd like sheep, by an irresistible sovereign, against whom they durst not speak one word, when he should think fit to sheer, flea [i.e., flay], or devour them.

Now what there is in this, and whether the *Hollanders* would be happy in such a condition, I shall at large hereafter give you my judgment.

But as to the stupidity of the *Hollanders*, whether that be so great, as that they have not wit enough to form a free commonwealth; and having found that precious jewel of freedom, would, with *Esop's* cocks, prefer a grain of corn before it: This is what hath not been judg'd so hitherto, but on the contrary. Which that it may be evident to the reader, he may be pleas'd to observe the prudent conduct of the states of *Holland*, at their great assembly in the years 1650 and 1651, as also seriously to ponder and weigh the manifold reasons and examples produced to this end in their *deduction* of the year 1654. All this is yet further confirmed by that

magnanimous resolution of the 23<sup>d</sup> of *January* 1657, wherein the states of *Holland* unanimously declared, after consulting the general assemblies, or common-halls of the respective cities in that province, to hold for a fundamental and certain maxim, "That to place a perpetual head, chieftain, or general over the army, is not only needless, but likewise exceeding prejudicial, and that accordingly in this province all things shall be thus directed; that whenever in a time of war, and pressing necessity, the states of *Holland*, with the other provinces, shall think fit to proceed to elect a general for the army, or that upon any other occasion a captain-general should be chosen, then not to chuse such a chieftain as shall have a perpetual commission, but for such an expedition, campaign, or occasion only as may happen, &c." And moreover, you may there see, that these, and other vigorous resolutions of the like nature, were taken with this special proviso, "that the said resolution shall not be dispensed with, but by the unanimous consent of all the members of the said assembly."

By this you may perceive, that the supposition of the *Hollanders* being phlegmatick and dull, and of a slavish nature, is altogether groundless; for seeing they became not free but by the death of the last stadtholder and captain general,<sup>12</sup> and that it was unseasonable and imprudent before that time, for them to shew their commendable zeal for their freedom, and their skill in point of government: and seeing it is evident, that a generation of men that are in freedom, must be overcome, before we can pass a right judgment thereof, and stop the mouths of opposers; we must therefore, leave it to God and time: and if such as like monarchical government, and those base and slavish opposers of liberty survive those times, they will then be able to discern which of the two governments is founded on best reason.

It shall not satisfy me to have said thus much in general; for seeing the states of *Holland* in their deduction, *Chap. 6. Art. 29.* declare, that they will not lose their freedom, but with their lives; I shall therefore presume to give my opinion of the political maxims of *Holland*, hoping that my sincere zeal and uprightness to express the same for the benefit of the publick, will be so acceptable to our lawful rulers, that tho' I may have

12. [I.e., William II.]

failed in some things, and by stating the true interest of my country, have been necessitated to reflect on persons, who seek their advantage to the prejudice of *Holland*, as it is now governed; the said rulers, and true lovers of their native country, will so favour this work, and its author, against the said malevolent persons, that it shall never repent him to have been the first generous and bold undertaker of so commendable a work. But howsoever things happen, or times oppose it, *recte fecisse merces est, & ipsa sui pretium virtus*; (*i. e.* to do good is a reward of it self, and virtue carries its own recompence along with it) I shall then, having done my duty as an honest man, good citizen, and upright christian, that may not bury his talent, be able to take comfort in my sincere endeavours: and posterity, into whose hands these writings may fall, will, in spite of all the present powers that oppose it, be able to judge impartially, and that with a sound judgment; because by that time they will have learned, by joyful or sad experience, whether *Holland's* interest can be settled upon any other foundation or maxims than those herein exprest; and whether these reasons of mine will not be confirmed by the experience of following ages.

## Chapter IX

*That the inhabitants of Holland, being in a state of freedom, are by a common interest wonderfully linked together; which is also shew'd by a rough calculation of the number of inhabitants, and by what means they subsist.*

We are moreover well to consider, that fishing is not the sole cause of traffick, nor fishing and traffick the cause of manufactory; as also that these three together do not always give occasion for the shipping that is to let out to freight, which is meant by navigation: but that fishing flourishes much more in those parts, because traffick, navigation and manufactures are settled among us, whereby the fish and oil taken may be transported and consumed. Likewise that more than the one half of our trading would decay, in case the trade of fish were destroyed, as well as all other sorts of commodities about which people are employed in *Holland*; besides that, by consequence the *inland consumption* of all foreign

goods being more than one half diminished, the traffick in those parts would fall proportionably.

It is also certain, that of necessity all sorts of manufactures would be lessened more than a moiety,<sup>13</sup> if not annihilated, as soon as this country should come to be bereft of fishing, and of trading in those commodities which are spent abroad. And concerning owners of ships let out to freight, it is evident that they wholly depend on the prosperity or success of fishing, manufactory, and traffick: for seeing our country yields almost nothing out of its own bowels; therefore the ships that lie for freight, can lade nothing but what the merchants or traders put on board them of fish, manufactory, or merchandize. And as little would foreign ships carry goods to *Holland*, in case no fishermen, merchants, or traders dealing in manufactory dwelt there. And contrariwise it is certain, that our fishers, manufacturers and traders, find a mighty conveniency and benefit in our great number of freight-ships, which continually lie for freight in all parts of the world, and are ready to carry the same at an easy rate to any place desired. So that the *English* and *Flemish* merchants, &c. do oft-times know no better way to transport their goods to such foreign parts as they design, than to carry them first to *Amsterdam*, and from thence to other places, especially when our admiralties, according to their duty, take care to convoy and defend our merchant ships, with men of war, against all pirates, or sea-robbers whatsoever. It is also evident, that the husbandmen, or boors<sup>14</sup> of *Holland*, can very well sell all the product or profit of their land, cattle, firing, &c. to the inhabitants that are fishers, manufacturers, traders, navigators, and those that depend on them; which is a great advantage beyond what all other boors have, who for the most part have their commodities spent abroad, and consequently must bear the charges of freight, and the duties outwards and inwards, and must also allow a double gain to the merchants and buyers. So that this great number of people, that are not husbandmen, are I think the only cause that those country boors, tho' heavily taxed, are able to subsist. And seeing all the said inhabitants have need of meat, drink, cloathing, housing, and of the gain gotten by foreign consumption that

13. [Half.]

14. [Plowmen.]

is needful to support it; it is evident, that all the other inhabitants depend and live upon the aforesaid fishers, traders and navigators.

And how remarkable it is, that all rulers and others, who for any service depend on them, have a benefit by their great numbers, is so clear, that there needs no more to be said for proof: for when there were but few inhabitants in this country, within less than 100 years, the most eminent offices of burgomaster, and *schepens* or sheriffs, were even in the principal cities so great a burden as not to be born without much charge; whereas it is now become profitable to be but a city messenger, or undertaker to freight ships, seeing men are thereby enabled to maintain their families.

Furthermore, having a mind to convince the reader, not only by my reasoning, but by his own experience, that the prosperity of *Holland* is built upon the foresaid means of subsistence, and on no other; I find myself obliged to make a calculation of the number of people in *Holland* that are fixed inhabitants, or depend upon them; and at the same time, as far as I am able, to reckon in what proportion those people are maintain'd by the means of subsistence before mentioned. In order to this I shall on the one hand consider, that Sir *Walter Raleigh*, endeavouring to move king *James* of *England* to advance the fishing trade, manufactures, and traffick by sea, hath possibly exceeded in his account of the profits arising from it, and augmented the number of the people that live upon it somewhat above the truth.

And on the other hand I shall consider what *Gerard Malines* saith, in his *Lex Mercatoria*, *Ann.* 1622.<sup>15</sup> that in *Flanders* there were then counted one hundred and forty thousand families; which being reckoned, one with another, at five persons each, they would amount to seven hundred thousand people. I shall likewise consider that in *Holland* that same year, the states laid a poll-tax upon all inhabitants, none excepted save strangers, prisoners, and vagrants, and those that were on the other side the line; yet were there found in all *South-Holland* that same wise no more than four hundred eighty one thousand nine hundred thirty and four: altho' the commissioners instructions for that end were very strict

15. [Gerard Malynes (1586–1641), *Consuetudo, vel Lex mercatoria, or, The ancient law-merchant* (London: Islip, 1622; repr. Goldbach, 1997).]

and severe, to prevent all fraud and deceit. However that we may make the better guess whether this was a faithful account, I shall give you the particulars of it as registred in the chamber of Accounts.

<i>Dort</i> with its villages,	40523
<i>Haerlem</i> with its villages,	69648
<i>Delft</i> with its villages,	41744
<i>Leyden</i> and <i>Rynland</i> ,	94285
<i>Amsterdam</i> and its villages,	115022
<i>Goude</i> and its villages,	24662
<i>Rotterdam</i> with its villages,	28339
<i>Gornichem</i> with its villages,	7585
<i>Schiedam</i> with its villages,	10393
<i>Schoonhoven</i> with its villages,	10703
<i>Briel</i> with its villages,	20156
The <i>Hague</i> ,	17430
<i>Heusden</i> .	<u>1444</u>
	481934

And supposing that *West-Friesland* might  
yield the fourth part of the inhabitants  
of *South Holland*, it would amount to

120483  
In all 602417

But because possibly none but intelligent readers, and such as have travelled, will believe, what we see is customary in all places, that the number of people in all populous countries is excessively magnified, and that the common readers will think, that since many would be willing to evade the poll-tax, there was an extraordinary fraud in the number given in: I shall therefore follow the common opinion, and conclude, that the number of people was indeed much greater, and that these countries are since that time much improved in the number of inhabitants; and accordingly I shall give a guess as by vulgar report, that the whole number, without excluding any inhabitants whatsoever, may amount to two millions and four hundred thousand people, and that they maintain themselves as followeth, *viz.*

By the fisheries at sea, and setting them out with ships, rigging, cask,



salt, and other materials, or instruments, and the traffick that depends thereon, 450000.

By agriculture, inland-fishing, herding, hay-making, turf-making, and by furnishing those people with all sorts of materials as they are boors, or husbandmen, 200000.

By making all manner of manufactures, shipping, works of art, mechanick or handicraft works, which are consumed abroad; as likewise by trade relating to the said manufactures, 650000.

By navigation or sailing for freight and trade jointly, by which I mean carriage into foreign parts for selling and buying; as also carrying to and from *Holland* all such wares and merchandise as relate not to our fishing and manufactory, nor depend thereon: and lastly, I include herein also all inhabitants that are any ways serviceable to such traders, and ships let out to freight, amounting in all to. 250000.

By all these inhabitants, as being men, women, and children, that must be provided, and by working about what is spent in this country, as food, drink, cloathing, housing, and by making or selling houshold stuff, and all other things for art, ease, pleasure, or ornament. 650000.

By the labour and care of all the above-mentioned persons, being gentry without employment or calling, civil magistrates and officers, those that live upon their estates or money, soldiers, the poor in hospitals, beggars, &c. 200000.

In all 2400000.

And tho' this calculation, whether considered as to the number of the inhabitants, or their proportionable means of subsistence, is very rough and uncertain; yet I suppose it to be evident, that the eighth part of the inhabitants of *Holland* could not be supplied with necessaries out of its own product, if their gain otherwise did not afford them all other necessaries: so that *homo homini deus in statu politico*, one man being a god to another under a good government, it is an unspeakable blessing for this land, that there are so many people in it, who according to the nature of the country are honestly maintain'd by such suitable or proportionable means, and especially that the welfare of all the inhabitants (the idle gentry, and foreign soldiers in pay excepted) from the least to the greatest,

does so necessarily depend on one another: and above all, it is chiefly considerable, that there are none more really interested in the prosperity of this country than the rulers of this aristocratical government, and the persons that live on their estates.

For fishers, boors, or country people, owners of ships let to freight, merchants and manufacturers, in a general destruction of a country, could easily transport themselves into foreign parts, and there set up their fishing, agriculture, or husbandry, shipping, merchandize and manufactures: But such as have lands, or immovable estates cannot do this; and supposing they could, and should sell their estates and remove into other countries, yet would they there have no calling to subsist by, much less can they expect to be made use of in the government, or procure any office or advantage depending upon it.

However, this excellent and laudable harmony and union may be violated, even to the ruin of all the inhabitants, none excepted but courtiers and soldiers, and that by one sole mistake in government, which is the electing one supreme head over all these inhabitants, or over their armies. For seeing such a single person for the increase of his grandeur, may curb and obstruct *Holland's* greatness and power, by the deputies of the lesser provinces of the generality, who also may in their course check the great and flourishing cities in their own provincial assemblies, by the suffrages or votes of the envious gentry. And the lesser cities, and the great persons, courtiers and soldiers being all of his party, and depending on him, must needs prey upon the industrious or working inhabitants, and so will make use of all their power for their own benefit, and to the detriment of the commonalty. And to the end they may receive no let from the great and strong cities of *Holland*, it follows that they would either weaken or lessen all such cities, and impoverish the inhabitants, to make them obedient without controul. Which if so, we have just cause continually to pray, *A furore monarcharum libera nos Domine*; God preserve *Holland* from the fury of a monarch, prince, or one supreme head. But what there is of reality in this, shall be handled hereafter in a chapter apart.

## Chapter XIV

*That freedom or toleration in, and about the service or worship of God, is a powerful means to preserve many inhabitants in Holland, and allure foreigners to dwell amongst us.*

In the first place it is certain, that not only those that deal in manufactures, fishing, traffick, shipping, and those that depend on them, but also all civilized people must be supposed to pitch upon some outward service of God as the best, and to be averse from all other forms; and that such persons do abhor to travel, and much more to go and dwell in a country, where they are not permitted to serve and worship God outwardly, after such a manner as they think fit. And also that as to freedom about the outward service of God, during the troubles, and shortly after; when the manufacturies, trading, and navigation for freight began to settle in *Holland*, the magistrate was so tender and indulgent, that there were very few useful inhabitants driven thence by any rigour or hardship, much less any foreigners: so that it brings that maxim into my mind, that<sup>16</sup> the surest way to keep any thing, is to make use of the same means whereby it was at first acquired.

And among those means, comes first into consideration the freedom of all sorts of religion differing from the Reformed. For in regard all our neighbours (except *Great Britain* and the *United Provinces*) and for the most part all far remote lands, are not of the reformed religion; and that the clergy under the papacy have their own jurisdiction: and seeing, if not all those that are called *spiritual*, yet the clergy at least that differ from us, have in all countries a settled livelihood, which depends not on the political welfare of the land: we see that through human frailty, they do in all these countries think fit to teach and preach up all that can have a tendency to their own credit, profit, and ease, yea, tho' it be to the ruin of the whole country; and moreover, when the doctrine, counsel, and admonition of these men is not received by any of their auditors, these clergymen do then very unmercifully use to prosecute them *odio theologico*.<sup>17</sup>

16. Res facile iisdem artibus retinentur quibus initio partae sunt.

17. [Out of doctrinal hatred.]

Whereas nevertheless all christian clergymen ought to rest satisfied, according to their master's doctrine, to enlighten the minds of men with the truth, and to shew them the way to eternal life, and afterwards to endeavour to perswade, and turn such enlightned persons in all humility and meekness into the path that leads to salvation. It is evident that all people, especially Christians, and more particularly their publick teachers, ought to be far from compelling, either by spiritual or bodily punishment, those that for want of light and persuasion are not inclined to go to the publick church, to do any outward act, or to speak any words contrary to their judgment; for *potestas coercendi*, the coercive power is given only to the civil magistrate; all the power and right which the ecclesiasticks have, if they have any, must be derived from them, as the same is excellently and unanswerably shewn by *Lucius Antistius Constans*, in his book *de Jure Ecclesiasticorum* lately printed.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed the essential and only difference between the civil and ecclesiastical power is this, that the civil doth not teach and advise as the other doth, but commands and compels the inhabitants to perform or omit such outward actions, or to suffer some certain punishment for their disobedience; so that they have dominion over the subject, *sive volentes, sive nolentes*, whether they will or no. Whereas on the other side, the duty of christian teachers is to instruct and advise men to all christian virtues, as trusting in God our Saviour, the hope of possessing a future eternal blessed life, and the love of God and our neighbour.<sup>19</sup> Which virtues consisting only in the inward thoughts of our minds, cannot be put into us by any outward violence or compulsion, but only by the inlightning and convincing reasons of ministers, who to effect this, must on all occasions comply with the state and condition of their hearers, and be the least amongst them: and thus making themselves the least, and thereby converting most, and bringing forth most good fruits, they shall be the first in the kingdom of heaven. *Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*<sup>20</sup> And besides, it is well known that our Lord Christ pretended to no other kingdom or dominion on earth (*his kingdom not being*

18. [Lucii Antistii Constantis (i.e., Benedict de Spinoza), *De Jure Ecclesiasticorum* (Amsterdam, 1665).]

19. 1 Cor. 13.

20. Matt. 20:27.

of *this world*<sup>21</sup>) than that every one being convinced of this his true doctrine, and wholesome advice, and of his holy sufferings for us, should freely be subject to him, not with the outward man only, to do or omit any action, to speak or be silent, but with the inward man *in spirit and truth*, to love God, himself, and his neighbour; to trust in that God and Saviour in all the occurrences of our lives, and by his infinite wisdom, mercy and power, to hope for a blessed and everlasting state for our souls.<sup>22</sup> So that it became not his disciples, or followers, and apostles, much less our present publick preachers, to set themselves above their spiritual lord and master, to lord it over others. *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; but ye shall not be so.*<sup>23</sup> The gospel also teacheth us, that they should not lord it over the people, but ought to be their servants, and ministers of the word of God. But notwithstanding all this, we see, that by these evil ambitious maxims of the clergy, almost in all countries, the dissenters, or such as own not the opinion of the publick preachers, are turned out of the civil state and persecuted; for they are not only excluded from all government, magistracies, offices and benefices (which is in some measure tolerable for the secluded inhabitants, and agrees very well with the maxims of polity, in regard it is well known by experience in all countries to be necessary, as tending to the common peace, that one religion should prevail and be supported above all others, and accordingly is by all means authorized, favoured, and protected by the state, yet not so, but that the exercise of other religions at the same time be in some measure publicly tolerated, at least not persecuted) but are so persecuted, that many honest and useful inhabitants, to escape those fines, banishments, or corporal punishments, to which by adhering to the prohibited service of God they are subject, abandon their own sweet native country, and, to obtain their liberty, chuse to come and sit down in our barren and heavy tax'd country.

Yea, and which is more, in some countries these churchmen will go so far, as by an inquisition to inquire who they are that differ from the opinion of the authorized preachers; and first by admonition and excommunication, bereave them of their credit, and afterwards of their liberty,

21. John 18:36.

22. John 4.

23. Luke 22:25, 26.

estate or life. And as heretofore the *Romish* clergy were not satisfied with obstructing the divine service of those that dissented from them, but laboured to bring the inquisition into all places; so would it be a great wonder if the ecclesiasticks in *Holland* should not follow the same worldly course, to the ruin of the country, if they conceiv'd it tended to the increase of their own profit, honour, power and grandeur. At least we see it in almost all countries, where the best and most moderate, yea even where the reformed clergy bear sway, that dissenting assemblies are prohibited. And seeing that the publick divine worship is so necessary for mankind, that without it they would fall into great ignorance about the service of God, and consequently into a very bad life; and since man's life is subject to many miseries, therefore every one is inclined in this wretched state to nourish or comfort his soul with the hope of a better: and as men hope very easily to obtain the same by a free and willing attention to a doctrine they think to be built on a good foundation; so every one may easily perceive how impossible it is to make any man by compulsion to hope for such advantage, in that which he cannot apprehend to be well grounded; and accordingly the dissenting party clearly discover<sup>24</sup> the vanity of all manner of force in matters of religion.

Moreover, seeing all matters of fact, and likewise of faith, must in some measure be proved by testimony of good credit, such as is irreproachable, or beyond exception; and that all that are thus persecuted, whether by excommunication, fines, banishment or corporal punishments, reproach and hate their persecutors, to wit, the publick authorised preachers, as their enemies; it is evident that those persecutors lose all their weight to persuade people in matters of faith by means of their publick authority, which otherwise would be great among the common people. And besides, we see, that all persecuted people continually exercise their thoughts upon any thing that seems to confirm their own judgment, and oft-times out of mere stomachfulness<sup>25</sup> and animosity will not ponder and sedately consider their enemies reasons: so that the persecuted people being wholly turn'd aside from the truth of God's worship by such violence and compulsion, become hardned in their error. By this

24. [I.e., reveal.]

25. [Stubbornness, obstinacy.]

means manifold wars, miseries and removals of habitations have been occasioned since the reformation: and the like actions will still have the like effects. How prejudicial such coercive practices are, especially in rich trafficking cities, *Lubeck*, *Collen*, and *Aix la Chapelle* may instruct us, where both the rulers and subjects of those lately so famous cities have since the reformation lost most of their wealth, and chiefly by such compulsion in religion; many of the inhabitants being thereby driven out of their respective cities, and strangers discouraged from coming to reside in them. And tho' according to clear reason, and holy writ, the true glory and fame of all rulers consists in the multitude of their subjects, yet do these churchmen (forgetting their credit, their country, and their God, which is a threefold impiety) continue to teach, that it is better to have a city of an orthodox or sound faith, ill stocked with people, than a very populous, and godly city, but tainted with heresy. Thus it is evident that to allow all men the exercise of their religion with more freedom than in other nations, would be a very effectual means for *Holland* to allure people out of other countries, and to fix them, that are there already; provided such freedom be not prejudicial to our civil state and free government.<sup>26</sup> For, as on the one side those of the *Romish* religion have their spiritual heads, and the K. of *Spain* (heretofore Earl of *Holland*) for their neighbour, who may help the *Romanists* in the time of intestine division; so on the other side it is manifest, that our own government by length of time is enlarged, and the *Spanish Netherlands* become weak; and that notwithstanding the renunciation of the said superiority over *Holland* we are in peace with them, it is also certain that by persecuting the *Romanists* we should drive most of the strangers out of our country; and the greatest number of the dissenting old inhabitants, *viz.* the gentry, monied-men and boors, who continue to dwell amongst us, would become so averse to the government, that in time it would be either a means to bring this country into the hands of our enemy, or else drive those people out of the country: which cruelty would not only be pernicious, but altogether unreasonable in the rulers and reformed subjects, who always us'd to boast that they fought for their liberty, and constantly

26. [Johan de la Court,] *Pol[itike] Disc[oursen]* (Leiden: Hackius, 1662),] lib. 4. Disc. 6[7?]. p. 320.

maintain'd, that several publick religions may be peaceably tolerated and practised in one and the same country; that true religion hath advantage enough when it's allowed to speak, *errantis poena doceri*,<sup>27</sup> and that there is no greater sign of a false religion (or at least of one to the truth of which men dare not trust) than to persecute the dissenters from it. So that it appears that toleration and freedom of religion is not only exceeding beneficial for our country in general, but particularly for the reformed religion, which may and ought to depend upon its own evidence and veracity.

## Chapter XV

*A second means to keep Holland populous, is a plenary freedom for all people that will cohabit with us, to follow any occupation for a livelihood.*

Next to a liberty of serving God, follows the liberty of gaining a livelihood without any dear-bought city-freedom, but only by virtue of a fixed habitation to have the common right of other inhabitants: which is here very necessary for keeping the people we have, and inviting strangers to come among us. For it is self-evident that landed-men, or others that are wealthy, being forced by any accident to leave their country or habitation, will never chuse *Holland* to dwell in, being so chargeable a place, and where they have so little interest for their mony. And for those who are less wealthy, it is well known, that no man from abroad will come to dwell or continue in a country where he shall not be permitted to get an honest maintenance. And it may be easily considered how great an inconveniency it would be in this country, for the inhabitants, especially strangers, if they should have no freedom of chusing and practising such honest means of livelihood as they think best for their subsistence; or if, when they had chosen a trade, and could not live by it, they might not chuse another. This then being evident, that strangers without freedom of earning their bread, and seeking a livelihood, cannot live amongst us: and as it is certain, that our manufacturies, fisheries, traffick and naviga-

27. [That punishments be taught to the wayward.]



tion, with those that depend upon them, cannot without continual supplies of foreign inhabitants be preserved here, and much less augmented or improved; it is likewise certain, that among the endless advantages which accrue to *Holland* by strangers, and which might accrue more, our boors may be likewise profited. For we see that for want of strangers in the country, the boors must give such great yearly and day-wages to their servants, that they can scarcely live but with great toil themselves, and their servants live rather in too great plenty. The same inconveniencies we are likewise sensible of in cities amongst tradesmen and servants, who are here more chargeable and burdensome, and yet less serviceable than in any other countries.

It is certain, that in all cities, tho' they invite strangers to cohabit with them, the ancient inhabitants have advantage enough by the government and its dependencies. And it is evident, that the old inhabitants, who live by their occupations, have a great advantage over the new comers, by their many relations, customers and acquaintance, most of the old manufactures, and great inland consumption: all which particulars yield the old inhabitants certain gain. But new comers leaving their own country upon any accident, and besides their moveable goods, bringing with them the knowledge of what is abounding, or wanting in their native country, and of all sorts of manufactures; they cannot live in *Holland* upon the interest of their money, nor on their real estates: so that they are compelled to lay out all their skill and estate in devising and forming of new fisheries, manufactures, traffick and navigation, with the danger of losing all they have. For he that sits idle in *Holland*, must expect to get nothing but certain and speedy poverty; but he that ventures may gain, and sometimes find out and meet with a good fishery, manufacture, merchandize or traffick: and then the other inhabitants may come in for a share in that new occupation, which is also very needful, because the old handicraft works being beaten down lower and lower in price, yield less profit. And therefore it is necessary that all strangers that are masters, journey-men, consumptioners, merchants, traders, &c. should live peaceably amongst us, without any disturbance, let, or molestation whatever, and use their own estates and trades as they shall judge best.

And tho' this will be ever detrimental to some old inhabitants, who would have all the profit, and bereave others of it, and under one pretext

or other exclude them from their trade; and therefore will alledge, that a citizen ought to have more privilege than a stranger; yet all inhabitants who have here a certain place of abode, or desire to have it as they are then no strangers, but inhabitants, so ought they to be permitted, as well as the burghers, to earn their necessary food, seeing they are in greater want than their opposers. And it is notorious, that all people, who to the prejudice of the common good would exclude others, that are likewise inhabitants of this land, from the common means of subsistence, or out of the respective cities, and for that end would have some specular<sup>28</sup> favour from the rulers beyond the rest, are very pernicious and mischievous inhabitants: it is also certain, that a state which cannot subsist of itself, ought not to deny that strangers should live amongst them with equal freedom with themselves, under pretence of privilege and right of cities; nor should they exclude any strangers, but endeavour continually to allure in new inhabitants; else such a state will fall to ruin. For the great dangers of carrying on new designs, of being robb'd at sea, of selling their goods by factors to unknown people, on twelve months credit, and at the same time running the hazard of all revolutions by wars and monarchical governments against this state, and of losses among one another, are so important (yet all to be expected) that many inhabitants concerned in the fisheries, traffick, manufactory, and consequently in ships set out to freight, will give over their trade, and depart the country when they have been so fortunate as to have gained any considerable estate, to seek a securer way of living elsewhere. On the other hand, we are to consider, that there will ever be many bankrupts and forsaken trades, both by reason of the dangers of foreign trade, and intolerable domestick taxes, which cannot be denied by any that knows that in *Amsterdam* alone there are yearly about three hundred abandoned or insufficient estates registred in the chamber of accompts of that city; and therefore there are continually many inhabitants, who finding the gain uncertain, and the charge great, are apt to relinquish it. So that it is ever necessary that we leave all ways open for people to subsist by, and a full liberty, as aforesaid, to allure foreigners to dwell among us. Moreover, tho' it be not convenient in general for strangers (*i.e.* such who, tho' they dwell in *Holland*,

28. [Improper; or perhaps peculiar, *i.e.*, exclusive.]

and have continued there some considerable time, are not natives) to partake of the government, yet is it very necessary, in order to fix them here, that we do not exclude them by laws.

## Chapter XVI

*That monopolizing companies and guilds, excluding all other persons from their societies, are very prejudicial to Holland.*

Much less ought we to curb or restrain our citizens and natives, any more than strangers, from their natural liberty of seeking their livelihoods in their native country, by select and authoriz'd companies and guilds: for when we consider, that all the trade of our common inhabitants is circumscribed or bounded well nigh within *Europe*, and that in very many parts of the same, as *France, England, Sweden, &c.* our greatest trade and navigation thither is cramped by the high duties, or by patent companies, like those of our *Indian* societies; as also how small a part of the world *Europe* is, and how many merchants dwell in *Holland*, and must dwell there to support it; we shall have no reason to wonder, if all the beneficial traffick in these small adjacent countries be either worn out, or in a short time be glutted with an over-trade. But we may much rather wonder, why the greatest part of the world should seem unfit for our common inhabitants to trade in, and that they should continue to be debarred from it, to the end that some few persons only may have the sole benefit of it. It is certainly known that this country cannot prosper, but by means of those that are most industrious and ingenious, and that such patents or grants do not produce the ablest merchants. But on the other hand, because the grantees, whether by burghership, select companies, or guilds, think they need not fear that others, who are much more ingenious and industrious than themselves, and are not of the burghership, companies and guilds, shall lessen their profits; therefore the certain gains they reap make them dull, slow, unactive, and less inquisitive. Whereas on the other side, we say that necessity makes the old wife trot, hunger makes raw beans sweet, and poverty begets ingenuity. And besides, it is well known, now especially when *Holland* is so heavily taxed,

that other less burdened people, who have no fisheries, manufactures, traffick and freight ships, cannot long subsist but by their industry, subtilty, courage, and frugality. In a word, these patent companies and guilds do certainly exclude many useful inhabitants from that trade and traffick. But those that possess those privileges with sufficient knowledge and fitness, need not fear that others that are more industrious and ingenious than themselves, shall prevent them of their profit by the exercise of the like abilities and parts; neither can it be so fully carried on and improved for the common benefit of the country, by a small number of people, as by many: so that in the mean time other people that we cannot exclude from that traffick or manufacture by means of our grants and guilds, have a great opportunity of profitably improving that which so foolishly, and with so much churlishness is prohibited to our common inhabitants. Whereas otherwise, the provident and industrious *Hollanders* would easily draw to them all foreign trade, and the making of incredibly more manufactures than we now work on. That which is objected against this is, that the *Hollanders* are a people of such a nature, that if the trade were open into *Asia*, *Africa*, and *America*, they would overstock all those countries with goods, and so destroy that trade to the prejudice of *Holland*; which is so far from the truth, and all appearance thereof, that it is hardly worth answering. For first, so great and mighty a trade by the *Hollanders*, in those vast and trafficking countries, would be the greatest blessing to them that could be wished for upon earth; would to God any of us could ever see *Holland* so happy. And next it cannot be denied, that even in this small *Europe*, the overstocking of countries with goods may indeed lessen the gains of some particular merchants; but yet after such a manner that the said overstocking with the said goods really is, and can be no other than an effect or fruit of a present overgrown trade of this country, in proportion to the smallness of those countries with which we are permitted to traffick. And thirdly, it is evident, that the *Hollanders* by such overstocking have never yet lost any trade in any country or place of *Europe*, nor can they lose it so long as that trade remains open, because that superfluity of goods transported is soon spent, and that same trade is by the same or some other of our merchants immediately reassumed and taken up, so soon as by a following scarcity in those countries there is any appearance of making more profit by those, or other commodities.

But supposing it to be true, that the *Dutch* merchants by overstocking those trading countries should run a risque of losing that trade in some parts; yet considering the smallness of those lands, it would then be doubly necessary to prevent the same by setting open the trade to *Asia*, *Africa* and *America*, for all the merchants of *Holland*. But on the other side, it is certain that the licensed monopolizing companies, by the unfaithfulness, negligence, and chargeableness of their servants, and by their vast, and consequently unmanageable designs, who are not willing to drive any trade longer than it yields excessive profit, must needs gain considerably in all their trade, or otherwise relinquish and forsake all countries that yield it not, which nevertheless would by our common inhabitants be very plentifully carried on.

In this respect it is worthy observation, that the authorized *Greenland* company made heretofore little profit by their fishing, because of the great charge of setting out their ships, and that the train-oil, blubber and whale-fins were not well made, handled, or cured; and being brought hither and put into warehouses, were not sold soon enough, nor to the company's best advantage. Whereas now that every one equips their vessels at the cheapest rate, follow their fishing diligently, and manage all carefully, the blubber, train-oil, and whale-fins are employed for so many uses in several countries, that they can sell them with that conveniency, that tho' there are now fifteen ships for one which formerly sailed out of *Holland* on that account, and consequently each of them could not take so many whales as heretofore; and notwithstanding the new prohibition of *France*, and other countries, to import those commodities; and tho' there is greater plenty of it imported by our fishers, yet those commodities are so much raised in the value above what they were whilst there was a company, that the common inhabitants do exercise that fishery with profit to the much greater benefit of our country, than when it was (under the management of a company) carried on but by a few. It is besides very considerable, that for the most part all trades and manufactures managed by guilds in *Holland*, do sell all their goods within this country to other inhabitants who live immediately by the fisheries, manufacturies, freight ships, and traffick: so that no members of those guilds, under what pretext soever, can be countenanced or indulged in their monopoly, or charter, but by the excluding of all other inhabitants, and

consequently to the hindrance of their country's prosperity. For how much soever those members sell their pains or commodities dearer than if that trade or occupation was open or free, all the other better inhabitants that gain their subsistence immediately, or by consequence by a foreign consumption, must bear that loss. And indeed our fishermen, dealers in manufactures, owners of freight-ships, and traders, being so burdened with all manner of imposts, to oppress them yet more in their necessity by these monopolies of guilds, and yet to believe that it redounds to the good of the land, because it tends to the benefit of such companies, is to me incomprehensible. These guilds are said indeed to be a useful sort of people; but next to those we call idle drones, they are the most unprofitable inhabitants of the country, because they bring in no profit from foreign lands for the welfare of the inhabitants of *Holland*. Esop hath well illustrated this folly by a cat, who first lick'd off the oil from an oiled file, and continued licking, not observing that she had by little and little lick'd her tongue thorough which was given her to sustain her life, and carry nourishment into her body, nor that she fed not on a file which did not consume, but on her own blood before her tongue was totally consumed.

On the contrary, I can see no good, nor appearance of good, which the guilds in *Holland* do produce, but only that foreign masters and journey-men artificers, having made their works abroad, and endeavouring to sell them to our inhabitants, thereby to carry the profit out of our country into their own, are herein check'd and opposed by our masters of guilds or corporations. But besides that this is more to the prejudice than advantage of the country, since by consequence our fishers, manufacturers, traders, and owners of ships let to freight, are thereby bereft of the freedom of buying their necessities at the cheapest rate they can; it is also evident, that this feeding of foreigners upon the *Hollander* would be more strenuously and profitably opposed and prevented, in case all handicraft work and occupations were permitted to be made, sold and practised by all, and no other people, except such as have their settled habitations in this country.

*A New Discourse of Trade*

1668

JOSIAH CHILD (1630–99) was born in Lincoln, the second son of the merchant Richard Child. Beginning as a merchant-apprentice, he was by 1655 furnishing stores for the Navy in Portsmouth, where he remained for many years. He also became a Member of Parliament for various election districts in 1659, from 1673 to 1678, and from 1685 to 1687. He received a baronetcy in 1678. His association with the East India Company was long and profitable. He became a director in 1677, was deputy-governor from 1684 to 1686 and again from 1688 to 1690, and was governor from 1681 to 1683 and 1686 to 1688. By 1683, his fortune was said to be in the vicinity of 200,000 pounds. He attempted to imitate the Dutch in enhancing the political power of the Company, collaborating with his brother, the military governor of Britain's Indian settlements, toward this end. When his brother's successor talked of governing by strict rule of law, Child is reported to have said that English laws were "a heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good government of their own families, much less for the regulation of companies and foreign commerce." His enemies accused him of bribery both at Court and at Westminster Hall. *A New Discourse of Trade*, whose introduction is reproduced here, was written in 1665 and first published in 1668. It is notable for its discussion of money and interest rates, and for its enumeration of the keys to Dutch commercial success, among other things. Its argument for a low statutory interest rate was attacked by John Locke in his 1692 tract "Some

Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest.” Some of its specific recommendations—on poor relief, for example—were adopted. It had a deep influence on eighteenth-century writers such as Vincent de Gournay and Turgot (see chapter 29 in this volume).

The edition used here is *A New Discourse of Trade* (1690; reprint, Foulis, 1751). The Introduction, a free-standing essay, is reproduced in its entirety. All notes are by the present editor.

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## A New Discourse of Trade

The prodigious increase of the Netherlanders in their domestic and foreign trade, riches, and multitude of shipping, is the envy of the present, and may be the wonder of future generations: and yet the means whereby they have thus advanced themselves, are sufficiently obvious, and in a great measure imitable by most other nations, but more easily by us of this kingdom of England, which I shall endeavour to demonstrate in the following discourse.

Some of the said means by which they have advanced their trade, and thereby improved their estates, are these following,

First, They have in their greatest councils of state and war, trading-merchants that have lived abroad in most parts of the world; who have not only the theoretical knowledge, but the practical experience of trade; by whom laws and orders are contrived, and peaces with foreign princes projected, to the great advantage of their trade.

Secondly, Their law of gavel-kind,<sup>1</sup> whereby all their children possess an equal share of their fathers estates after their decease, and so are not

1. [Johnson's Dictionary reports that the custom is in force in various parts of England, but especially in Kent. See Silas Taylor, *The History of Gavel-kind* (London: John Starkey, 1663; repr. 1970).]



left to wrestle with the world in their youth, with inconsiderable assistance of fortune, as most of our youngest sons of gentlemen in England are, who are bound apprentices to merchants.

Thirdly, Their exact making of all their native commodities, and packing of their herring, codfish, and all other commodities, which they send abroad in great quantities; the consequence of which is, that the repute of their said commodities abroad, continues always good, and the buyers will accept of them by the marks, without opening; whereas the fish which our English make in Newfoundland and New-England, and herrings at Yarmouth, often prove false and deceitfully made; and our pilchards<sup>2</sup> from the west-country false packed seldom contain the quantity for which the hogsheads are marked in which they are packed.

And in England the attempts which our forefathers made for regulating of manufactures, when left to the execution of some particular person, in a short time resolved but into a tax upon the commodity, without respect to the goodness of it; as most notoriously appears in the business of the AULNAGE,<sup>3</sup> which doubtless our predecessors intended for a scrutiny into the goodness of the commodity; and to that purpose a seal was invented, as a signal that the commodity was made according to the statutes, which seals, it is said, may now be bought by thousands, and put upon what the buyers please.

Fourthly, Their giving great encouragement and immunities to the inventors of new manufactures, and the discoverers of any new mysteries in trade, and to those that shall bring the commodities of other nations first in use and practice amongst them; for which the author never goes without his due reward allowed him at the public charge.

Fifthly, Their contriving and building of great ships to sail with small charge, not above one third of what we are at, for ships of the same burthen in England; and compelling their said ships, being of small force to sail always in fleets, to which in all time of danger they allow convoy.

Sixthly, Their parsimonious and thrifty living, which is so extraordinary,

2. [Also pilcher; a herring-like fish caught in Cornwall.]

3. [See also Edward Misselden, *Free Trade, or The Meanes to Make Trade Flourish* (London: Legatt, 1622).]

that a merchant of one hundred thousand pounds estate with them, will scarce expend so much per cent. as one of fifteen hundred pounds estate in London.

Seventhly, The education of their children, as well daughters as sons; all which, be they of never so great quality or estate, they always take care to bring up to write perfect good hands, and to have the full knowledge and use of arithmetic and merchants accounts; the well understanding and practice of which, does strangely infuse into most that are the owners of that quality, of either sex, not only an ability for commerce of all kinds, but a strong aptitude, love, and delight in it; and in regard the women are as knowing therein as the men, it does encourage their husbands to hold on their trades to their dying days, knowing the capacity of their wives to get in their estates, and carry on their trades after their deaths: whereas if a merchant in England arrive at any considerable estate, he commonly withdraws his estate from trade, before he comes near the confines of old age; reckoning that if God should call him out of the world, while the main of his estate is engaged abroad in trade, he must lose one third of it, through the unexperience and unaptness of his wife to such affairs; and so it usually falls out.

Besides, it has been observed in the nature of arithmetic, that like other parts of the mathematics, it does not only improve the rational faculties, but inclines those that are expert in it to thriftiness and good husbandry, and prevents both husbands and wives in some measure in running out of their estates, when they have it always in their heads what their expences do amount to, and how soon by that course their ruin must overtake them.

Eightly, The lowness of their customs, and the height of their excise, which is certainly the most equal and indifferent tax in the world, and least prejudicial to any people, as might be made appear, were it the subject of this discourse.

Ninthly, The careful providing for, and employment of their poor, which it is easy to demonstrate can never be done in England comparatively to what it is with them, while it is left to the care of every parish to look after their own only.

Tenthly, Their use of banks, which are of so immense advantage to them, that some not without good grounds have estimated the profit of

them to the public, to amount to at least one million of pounds sterling per annum.

Eleventhly, Their toleration of different opinions in matters of religion: by reason of which many industrious people of other countries, that dissent from the established government of their churches, resort to them with their families and estates, and after a few years co-habitation with them, become of the same common interest.

Twelfthly, Their law-merchant, by which all controversies between merchants and tradesmen are decided in three or four days time, and that not at the fortieth part, I might say in many cases not the hundredth part, of the charge they are with us.

Thirteenthly, The law that is in use among them for transferring of bills for debt from one man to another: this is of extraordinary advantage to them in their commerce; by means of which, they can turn their stocks twice or thrice in trade, for once that we can in England; because having sold our foreign goods here, we cannot buy again to advantage, till we are possest of our money; which perhaps, we shall be six, nine, or twelve months in recovering: and if what we sell be considerable, it is a good man's work all the year to be following vintners and shopkeepers for money, whereas, were the law for transferring bills in practice with us, we could presently after sale of our goods, dispose of our bills, and close up our accounts, to do which, the advantage, ease, and accommodations it would be to trade, is so great, that none but merchants who have lived where that custom is in use, can value to its due proportion.

Fourteenthly, Their keeping up public registers of all lands and houses, sold or mortgaged, whereby many chargeable law-suits are prevented, and the securities of lands and houses rendred indeed, such as we commonly call, real securities.

Lastly, The lowness of interest of money, with them, which in peaceable times exceeds not three per cent. per annum; and is now during this war with England,<sup>4</sup> not above four per cent. at most.

Some more particulars might be added, and those aforesaid further improved, were it my purpose to discourse at large of trade, but most of the former particulars are observed and granted by all men that make it

4. [I.e., the Second Anglo-Dutch War, 1665–67.]

any part of their business to inspect the true nature and principles of trade; but the last is not so much as taken notice of by the most ingenious, to be any cause of the great increase of the riches and commerce of that people.

I shall therefore in this paper confine myself to write principally my observations touching that, viz.

The profit that people have received, and any other may receive, by reducing the interest of money to a very low rate.

This, in my poor opinion, is the CAUSA CAUSANS of all the other causes of the riches of that people; and that if interest of money were with us reduced to the same rate it is with them, it would in a short time render us as rich and considerable in trade as they now are, and consequently be of greater damage to them, and advantage to us, than can happen by the issue of this present war, though the success of it should be as good as we could wish, except it end in their total ruin and extirpation.

To illustrate this, let us impartially search our books, and enquire in what the state and condition of this kingdom was, as to trade and riches, before any law concerning the interest of money was made: the first of which that I can find, was anno 1545. and we shall be informed that the trade in England then was inconsiderable, and the merchants very mean and few: and that afterwards, viz. anno 1635. within ten years after interest was brought down to eight per cent. there were more merchants to be found upon the exchange worth each one thousand pounds and upward, than were in the formers days, viz. before the year 1600. to be found worth one hundred pounds each.

And now since interest has been for about twenty years at six per cent. notwithstanding our long civil wars, and the great complaints of the deadness of trade, there are more men to be found upon the exchange now worth ten thousand pounds estates, than were then of one thousand pounds.

And if this be doubted, let us ask the aged, whether five hundred pounds portion with a daughter sixty years ago, were not esteemed a larger portion than two thousand pounds now: and whether gentlemen in those days would not esteem themselves well cloathed in a serge gown, which a chamber-maid now will be ashamed to be seen in:

whether our citizens and middle sort of gentry now are not more rich in cloaths, plate, jewels, and household goods, &c. than the best sort of knights and gentry were in those days. And whether our best sort of knights and gentry now do not exceed by much in those things the nobility of England sixty years past: many of whom then would not go to the price of a whole satten doublet; the embroiderer being yet living, who has assured me he has made many hundreds of them for the nobility with canvas backs.

Which way ever we take our measures, to me it seems evident, that since our first abatement of interest, the riches and splendor of this kingdom is increased to above four, I might say above six, times so much as it was.

We have now almost one hundred coaches for one we had formerly, we with ease can pay a greater tax now in one year, than our fore-fathers could in twenty.

Our customs are very much improved, I believe above the proportion aforesaid, of six to one; which is not so much in advance of the rates of goods, as by increase of the bulk of trade; for though some foreign commodities are advanced, others of our native commodities and manufactures are considerably abated, by the last book of rates.

I can myself remember since there were not in London used so many wharfs or keys for the landing of merchants goods, by at least one third part as now there are; and those that were then, could scarce have employment for half what they could do; and now notwithstanding one third more used to the same purpose, they are all too little in a time of peace, to land the goods at, which come to London.

If we look into the country, we shall find lands as much improved since the abatement of interest, as trade, &c. in cities; that now yielding twenty years purchase, which then would not have sold for above eight or ten at most.

Besides, the rent of farms have been for these last thirty years much advanced; and altho' they have for these three or four last years fallen, that has no respect at all to the lowness of interest at present, nor to the other mistaken reasons which are commonly assigned for it.

But principally to the vast improvement of Ireland, since a great part of it was lately possessed by the industrious English, who were soldiers in the late army, and the late great land taxes.

More might be said, but the premises being considered, I judge will sufficiently demonstrate how greatly this kingdom of England has been advanced in all respects for these last fifty years: and that the abatement of interest has been the cause of it, to me seems most probable; because as it appears, it has been in England, so I find it is at this day in all Europe and other parts of the world; insomuch that to know whether any country be rich or poor, or in what proportion it is so, no other question needs to be resolved, but this, viz. what interest do they pay for money?

Near home we see it evidently, in Scotland and Ireland, where ten and twelve per cent. is paid for interest; the people are poor and despicable, their persons ill clothed, their houses worse provided, and money intolerable scarce, notwithstanding they have great plenty of all provisions, nor will their land yield above eight or ten years purchase at most.

In France where money is at seven per cent. their lands will yield about eighteen years purchase; and the gentry who possess lands, live in good condition, tho' the peasants are little better than slaves, because they can possess nothing but at the will of others.

In Italy money will not yield above three per cent. to be let out upon real security; there the people are rich, full of trade, well attired, and their lands will sell at thirty five to forty years purchase; and that it is so, or better with them in Holland, is too manifest.

In Spain the usual interest is ten and twelve per cent. and there, notwithstanding they have the only trade in the world for gold and silver, money is no where more scarce; the people poor, despicable, and void of commerce, other than such as the English, Dutch, Italians, Jews, and other foreigners bring to them; who are to them in effect, but as leeches, who suck their blood and vital spirits from them.

I might urge many other instances of this nature, not only out of Christendom, but from under the Turks dominions, East-India and America: but every man by his experience in foreign countries, may easily inform himself, whether this rule does universally hold true or not: for my part, to satisfy my own curiosity, I have for some years, as occasion offered, diligently enquired of all my acquaintance that had knowledge of foreign countries, and I can truly say that I never found it to fail in any particular instance.

Now if upon what has been said, it be granted that *de facto*, this king-

dom is richer at least four-fold, I might say eight fold, than it was before any law for interest was made, and that all countries are at this day richer or poorer in an exact proportion to what they pay, and have usually paid for the interest of money; it remains that we enquire carefully, whether the abatement of interest be in truth the cause of the riches of any country, or only the concomitant or effect of the riches of a country; in which seems to lie the intricacy of this question.

To satisfy myself in which, I have taken all opportunities to discourse this point with the most ingenious men I had the honour to be known to, and have searched for, and read all the books that I could ever hear were printed against the abatement of interest, and seriously considered all the arguments and objections used by them against it; all which have tended to confirm me in this opinion, which I humbly offer to the consideration of wiser heads, viz. that the abatement of interest is the cause of the prosperity and riches of any nation, and that the bringing down of interest in this kingdom from 6 to 4, or 3 per cent. will necessarily, in less than twenty years time, double the capital stock of the nation.

The most material objections I have met with against it are as follows:

Object. 1. To abate interest, will cause the Dutch and other people that have money put out at interest in England, by their friends and factors, to call home their estates, and consequently will occasion a great scarcity and want of money amongst us.

To this I answer, that if interest be brought to 4 per cent. no Dutchman will call in his money that is out upon good security in England, because he cannot make above 3 per cent. of it upon interest at home. But if they should call home all the money they have with us at interest, it would be better for us than if they did it not; for the borrower is always a slave to the lender, and shall be sure to be always kept poor, while the other is fat and full: he that uses a stock that is none of his own, being forced for the upholding his reputation to live to the full, if not above the proportion of what he does so use, while the lender possessing much, and using little or none, lives only at the charge of what he uses, and not of what he has.

Besides, if with this law for abatement of interest, a law for transferring bills of debt should pass, we should not miss the Dutch money, were it ten times as much as it is amongst us; for such a law will certainly

supply the defect of at least one half of all the ready money we have in use in the nation.

Object. 2. If interest be abated, land must rise in purchase, and consequently rents; and if rents, then the fruits of the land; and so all things will be dear, and how shall the poor live? &c.

Ans. To this I say, if it follow that the fruits of our land, in consequence of such a law for abatement of interest, grow generally dear, it is an evident demonstration that our people grow richer; for generally, wherever provisions are for continuance of years dear in any country, the people are rich; and where they are most cheap throughout the world, for the most part the people are very poor.

And for our own poor in England, it is observed, that they live better in the dearest countries for provisions, than in the cheapest, and better in a dear year than in a cheap, especially in relation to the public good, for in a cheap year they will not work above two days in a week; their humour being such, that they will not provide for a hard time, but just work so much and no more, as may maintain them in that mean condition to which they have been accustomed.

Object. 3. If interest be abated, usurers will call in their money; so what shall gentlemen do, whose estates are mortgaged? &c.

Ans. I answer, that when they know they can make no more of their money by taking out of one, and putting it into another hand, they will not be so forward as they threaten, to alter that security they know is good, for another that may be bad: or if they should do it, our laws are not so severe, but that gentlemen may take time to dispose of part of their land, which immediately after such a law will yield them thirty years purchase at least; and much better it is for them so to do, than to abide longer under that consuming plague of usury, which has insensibly destroyed very many of the best families in England, as well of our nobility as gentry.

Object. 4. As interest is now at 6 per cent. the king's majesty upon any emergency can hardly be supplied; and if it should be reduced to 4 per cent. how shall the king find a considerable sum of money to be lent him by his people?

Ans. I answer, the abatement of interest to the people, is the abatement of interest to the king, when he has occasion to take up money; for what is borrowed of the city of London, or other bodies politic, nothing



can be demanded but the legal interest; and if the king have occasion to take up money of private persons, seeing his majesty, according to good right, is above the common course of law, the king must, and always has given more than the legal rate. As for instance; the legal rate is now 6 per cent. but his majesty, or such as have disposed of his majesty's exchequer-tallies, have been said to give ten and twelve in some cases; and if the legal rate were 10, his majesty might probably give 13 or 14; so if interest be brought to 4 per cent. his majesty in such cases as he now gives 10, must give but 6 or 7; by which his majesty would have a clear advantage.

Object. 5. If interest be abated, it will be a great prejudice to widows and orphans, who have not knowledge and abilities to improve their estates otherwise.

Answ. I answer, that by our law now, heirs and orphans can recover no interest from their parents executors, except it be left fully and absolutely to the executors to dispose and put out money at the discretion of the executors, for the profit and loss of the heirs and orphans; and if it be so left to the executors discretion, they may improve the monies left them in trade, or purchase of lands and leases, as well as by interest; or when not, the damage such heirs and orphans will sustain in their minority, being but two per cent. is inconsiderable, in respect of the great advantage that will accrue to the nation in general, by such abatement of interest.

Besides, when such a law is made, and in use, all men will so take care in their life to provide for and educate their children, and instruct their wives, as that no prejudice can happen thereby, as we see there does not in Holland and Italy, and other places where interest is so low.

Having now offered my thoughts in answer to the aforesaid objections, it will not be amiss that we enquire who will be advantaged, and who will receive prejudice, in case such a law be made.

First, his majesty, as has been said in answer to that objection, will, when he has occasion, take up money on better terms. Besides which, he will receive a great augmentation to his revenue thereby, all his lands being immediately worth, after the making such a law, double to what they were before; his customs will be much increased by the increase of trade, which must necessarily ensue from the making such a law.

The nobility and gentry, whose estates lie mostly in land, may presently upon all they have, instead of fifty write one hundred.

The merchants and tradesmen, who bear the heat and burthen of the day, (most of our trade being carried on by young men that take up money at interest) will find their yoke sit lighter upon their shoulders, and be encouraged to go on with greater alacrity in their business.

Our mariners, shipwrights, porters, clothiers, packers, and all sorts of labouring people that depend on trade, will be more constantly and fully employed.

Our farmers will sell the product of their lands at better rates. And whereas our neighbours, the Netherlanders (who in regard of the largeness of their stocks and experiences, the sons continually succeeding the fathers in trade to many generations, we may not unfitly in this case term sons of Anach, and men of renown)<sup>5</sup> against whom we fight dwarfs and pigmies in stocks and experience, being younger brothers of gentlemen that seldom have above one thousand pounds, sometimes not two hundred to begin the world with: instead, I say, of such young men and small stocks, if this law pass, we shall bring forth our Sampsons and Goliaths in stocks, subtilty, and experience in trade to cope with our potent adversaries on the other side, there being to every man's knowledge that understands the exchange of London, divers English merchants of large estates, who have not much past their middle age, and yet have wholly left off their trades, having found the sweetness of interest, which if that should abate, must again set their hands to the plough, which they are as able to hold and govern now as ever, and also will engage them to train up their sons in the same way, because it will not be so easy to make them country gentlemen as now it is, when lands sell at thirty or forty years purchase.

For the sufferers by such a law, I know none but idle persons that live at as little expence as labour, neither scattering by their expences, so as the poor may glean any thing after them, nor working with their hands or heads to bring either wax or honey to the common hive of the kingdom; but swelling their own purses by the sweat of other mens brows, and the contrivances of other mens brains. And how unprofitable it is for any nation to suffer idleness to suck the breast of industry, needs no demonstration. And if it be granted me, that these will be the effects of

5. [I.e., giants; cf. Numbers 13:33.]

an abatement of interest, then I think it is out of doubt, that the abatement of interest does tend to the enriching of a nation, and consequently has been one great cause of the riches of the Dutch and Italians, and the increase of the riches of our own kingdom in these last fifty years.

Another argument to prove which, we may draw from the nature of interest itself, which is of so prodigious a multiplying nature, that it must of necessity make the lenders monstrous rich, if they live at any moderate expence, and the borrowers extream poor; a memorable instance of which we have in old Audley deceased, who did wisely observe, that one hundred pounds only, put out at interest at 10 per cent. does in seventy years, which is but the age of a man, increase to above one hundred thousand pounds; and if the advantage be so great to the lender, the loss must be greater to the borrower, who, as has been said, lives at a much larger expence. And as it is between private persons, so between nation and nation, that have communication one with another. For whether the subjects of one nation lend money to subjects of another, or trade with them for goods, the effect is the same. As for example, a Dutch merchant that has but four or five thousand pounds clear stock of his own, can easily borrow and have credit for fifteen thousand pounds more at 3 per cent. at home; with which, whether he trade or put it to use in England, or any country where interest of money is high, he must necessarily, without very evil accidents attend him, in a very few years treble his own capital.

This discovers the true cause, why the sugar-bakers of Holland can afford to give a greater price for Barbadoes sugars in London, besides the second freight and charges upon them between England and Holland, and yet grow exceeding rich upon their trade; whereas our sugar-bakers in London, that buy sugars here at their own doors, before such additional freight and charges come upon them, can scarce live upon their callings; ours here paying for a good share of their stocks 6 per cent. and few of them employ in their sugar works above six to ten thousand pounds at most; whereas in Holland they employ twenty, thirty, to forty thousand pounds stock in a sugar-house, paying but 3 per cent. at most for what they take up at interest, to fill up their said stocks, which is sometimes half, sometimes three quarters of their whole stocks. And as it is with this trade, the same rule holds throughout all other trades whatsoever. And for us to say, if the Dutch put their money to interest among

us, we shall have the advantage, by being full and flush of coin at home, it is a mere chimera, and so far from an advantage, that it is an extream loss, rendring us only in the condition of a young gallant, that has newly mortgaged his land, and with the money thereby raised, stuffs his pockets, and looks big for a time, not considering that the draught of cordial he hath received, though it be at present grateful to his palate, does indeed prey upon his vital spirits, and will in a short time render the whole body of his estate in a deep consumption, if not wholly consumed. Besides, whatever money the Dutch lend us, they always keep one end of the chain at home in their own hands, by which they can pull back when they please their lean kine,<sup>6</sup> which they send hither to be fatted.

This makes me conclude that Moses, that wise legislator, in his forbidding the Jews to lend money at use one to another, and permitting them to lend their money to strangers, ordained that law as much to a political as a religious intent, knowing that by the latter they should enrich their own nation, and by the former no public good could ensue. The consequence being only to impoverish one Jew to make another rich.

This likewise takes off the wonder how the people of Israel, out of so small a territory as they possessed, could upon all occasions set forth such vast and numerous armies, almost incredible, as all histories, sacred and prophane, report they did; which is neither impossible nor strange to any that have well considered the effects of their laws concerning usury, which were sufficient to make any barren land fruitful, and a fruitful land an entire garden, which by consequence would maintain ten times the number of inhabitants that the same tract of land would do where no such laws were.

To conclude, it is, I think, agreed on by all, that merchants, artificers, farmers of land, and such as depend on them, which for brevity-sake we may here include under one of these general terms, viz. seamen, fishermen, breeders of cattle, gardeners, &c. are the three sorts of people who by their study and labour do principally, if not only, bring in wealth to a nation from abroad; other kinds of people, viz. nobility, gentry, lawyers, physicians, scholars of all sorts, and shopkeepers, do only hand it from one to another at home. And if abatement of interest, besides the general

6. [Cows.]

benefit it brings to all, except the griping dronish usurer, will add new life and motion to those most profitable engines of the kingdom, as I humbly suppose, will be manifest upon serious consideration of what has been said; then I think it will be out of doubt, that the abatement of interest is the cause of the increase of the trade and riches of any kingdom.

## Supplement

The foregoing discourse I wrote in the sickness-summer at my country habitation, not then intending to publish it, but only to communicate it to some honourable and ingenious friends of the present parliament, who were pleased to take copies of it for their own deliberate consideration, and digestion of the principles therein asserted; which at first were strange to them, as I expect they will be to most others, till they have spent some time in thinking on them; after which, I doubt not but that all men will be convinced of the truth of them, that have not some private interest of their own against them, external to the general good of the kingdom. For sure I am they have a foundation in nature, and that according to the excellent Sir William Petty's observation in his last discourse, concerning taxes, "*res nolent male administrare*:" nature must and will have its course, the matter in England is prepared for an abatement of interest, and it cannot long be obstructed; and after the next abatement, whoever lives forty years longer, shall see a second abatement; for we shall never stand on even ground in trade with the Dutch, till interest be the same with us as it is with them.

His majesty was graciously pleased at the opening of the last session of this parliament, to propose to the consideration of both houses, the ballancing of the trade of the nation; to effect which, in my opinion, the abatement of interest is the first and principal engine which ought to be set on work, which notwithstanding, I should not have presumed to expose to public censure, on my own single opinion, if I had not had the concurrences of much better judgments than my own; having never seen any thing in print for it, though much against it, until the latter end of January last; at which time, a friend whom I had often discoursed with upon this subject, met with by accident a small tract to the same purpose,

wrote near fifty years ago, which he gave me, and I have, for the public good, thought fit to annex it hereunto verbatim.

The author of the said tract, by its stile, seems to have been a country gentleman, and my education has mostly been that of a merchant, so I hope, that going together, they may in some measure, supply the defect of each other.

Another reason that induced me to the printing of them together, is, because what he wrote then, would be the consequence of the abatement of interest from 10 to 6 per cent. I have, I think, fully proved to the conviction of all men not wilfully blind, they have been the real effects of it, and that to a greater proportion than he did promise; every paragraph of which is written by me, and copies of it delivered to several worthy members of this parliament, many months before ever I saw or heard of this, or any thing else written or printed to the like purpose.

What I have aimed at in the whole, is the good of my native country, otherwise I had not busied my self about it; for I want not employment sufficient of my own, nor have reason to be out of love with that I have.

The several particulars in the beginning of this treatise, relating to trade, I have only hinted in general terms; hoping that some abler pen will hereafter be incited for the service of his king and country, to enlarge more particularly upon them.

Before I conclude, though I have studied brevity in the whole, I cannot omit the inserting of one objection more, which I have lately met with, to the main design of this treatise, viz.

Object. It is said that the lowness of interest of money in Holland, is not the effect of the laws, but proceeds only from their abundance of coin; for that in Holland, there is no law limiting the rate of usury.

Answ. I answer, that it may be true, that in Holland there has not lately been any law, to limit usury to the present rate it is now at, i.e. 3 or 4 per cent. Altho' most certain it is, that many years since, there was a law that did limit it to 5 or 6 at most: and by consequence, there would be a renewing of that law to a lesser rate, were it necessary at this time; it having always been the policy of that people to keep down the interest of their money, 3 or 4 per cent. under the rate of what is usually paid in their neighbouring countries, which, being now naturally done, it is needless to use the artificial stratagem of a law to establish.

Answ. 2. Although they have no law expressly limiting interest at present, yet they have other laws which we cannot yet arrive to, and those do effect the same thing among them, and would do the like among us, if we could have them: one of which, is their ascertaining real securities by their public registers: for we see evidently, money is not so much wanting in England as securities, which men account infallible; a remarkable instance of which is, the east-India company, who can and do take up what money they please, for 4 per cent. at any time.

Another law is, their constitutions of Banks and Lumbards, whereby private persons that have but tolerable credit may be supplied at easy rates from the state.

A third, and very considerable one, is, their law for transferring bills of debt, mentioned in the beginning of this discourse.

A fourth, which is a custom, and in effect may be here to our purpose accounted as a law, is the extraordinary frugality used in all their public affairs, which in their greatest extremities have been such, as not to compel them to give above four per cent for the loan of money. Whereas it is said, his majesty in some cases of exigency, when the national supplies have not come in to answer the present emergencies of affairs, has been enforced to give above the usual rates to goldsmiths; and that encouraged them to take up great sums from private persons at the full rate of 6 per cent. whereas formerly they usually gave but 4 per cent. Otherwise, in human probability money would have fallen of itself to 4 per cent.

But again, to conclude, every nation does proceed according to the peculiar methods of their own in the transactions of their public affairs and law-making; and in this kingdom it has always been the custom to reduce the rate of interest by a law, when nature had prepared the matter fit for such an alteration, as now I say it has. By a law it was reduced from an unlimited rate, to 10; and afterwards from 10 to 8; and after that from 8 to 6. And through the blessing of almighty God, this kingdom has found, as I think I have fully proved, and every man's experience will witness, prodigious success and advantage thereby. And I doubt not, through the like blessing of God almighty, but this generation will find the like great and good effects, by the reduction of it from 6 to 4, which is now at the birth. And that the next generation will yet see far greater advantages by bringing it from 4 to 3 per cent.

# 4



## *Moral Essays*

1671

PIERRE NICOLE (1625–95) was born into a respectable family of the legal *bourgeoisie* in Chartres. Moving to Paris for his studies, he entered the Jansenist (Augustinian) religious community of Port-Royal, where he was made an instructor. He became a tonsured cleric, stopping short of a full theology degree upon the outbreak of polemic over the Five Propositions of the Jansenists in 1649. He collaborated with the Jansenist Antoine Arnauld and with Pascal in the 1650s, and he aided the latter in composing his *Lettres provinciales*. A strong defender of the Jansenists in public, he tried to temper and moderate their views in private. After the death of the important Jansenist patroness the Duchess of Longueville in 1677, Nicole traveled abroad to Brussels, Liège, and elsewhere for some time, employing many pseudonyms along the way. Spurning Arnauld's invitation to join him in Holland, Nicole—ill and tired in 1679—approached the Archbishop of Paris about returning to France, which he did, to the consternation of the Jansenists, in May 1683. It was then that he turned his attention to the multivolume *Essais de morale*, his most important work, from which the accompanying excerpts are taken. The *Essais de morale* is a polyglot series of reflections on a whole range of moral, social, psychological, and political subjects that have increasingly attracted the favorable attention of modern scholars. His innumerable other works include mainly polemics and works of theology.

The excerpts here are taken from *Essais de morale* (Paris: Desprez, 1733–71; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 193–96 and 261–63;



and vol. 2, pp. 116–18, 36–44, and 55–58. They have been chosen to illustrate both a metaphorical use of the language of “commerce” in a work of moral theory, and a Jansenist view of modern trends in technology and global trade. The unbracketed note is by Nicole; material in brackets is by the editor.

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## Moral Essays

### Vol. 1: On Ways to Keep the Peace with Men

#### First part

Querite pacem civitatis ad quam transmigrare vos feci: & orate pro ea ad Dominum, quia in pace illius erit pax vobis.

“And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Jer. 29, v. 7)

#### Chapter I

*On men who are citizens of several cities: how they must bring peace to all of them, and strive in particular to live in peace with the society to which they belong and in which they spend their lives.*

All the societies we belong to—all the things we have some relation or commerce<sup>o</sup> with, upon which we act, or which act upon us, and whose varying states are capable of altering the disposition of our souls—are the cities where we spend the time of our pilgrimage; for our souls find both occupation and peace there.

Hence the whole world is our city, since as inhabitants of the world,

we have relations with every man; sometimes we benefit from it, and sometimes we suffer harm from it. The Dutch have commerce with the Japanese. We have commerce with the Dutch. So we have commerce with these peoples who live at the very ends of the world; for the advantages the Dutch draw from this enable them either to be useful to us, or to do us harm. One can say as much of any other people. They are all attached to us at some point, and they are all part of the chain linking together all men with the mutual needs they have of one another.

But we are even more especially the citizens of the kingdom where we were born, and where we live; of the city we inhabit; of the society we belong to. And finally, we may say of ourselves, as it were, that we are the citizens of ourselves and of our own hearts. For our various passions and our various thoughts are like a people with which we have to live; and it is often easier to live with the whole external world than with this inner people we carry within ourselves.

The Scripture which obliges us to seek the peace of the city where God has caused us to live, refers also to all those different cities. In other words, it obliges us to seek and desire the peace and tranquillity of the whole world, our kingdom, our city, our society, and ourselves. But since we are more capable of bringing peace to some of these cities than to others, we must strive for that in diverse ways.

Indeed there is scarcely anyone that could bring peace either to the world, or to kingdoms, or to cities, other than by their prayers. Hence our duty in this matter merely consists in sincerely asking [peace] from God, and in believing that we have to do so. And we have to do so indeed, because the external upheavals dividing kingdoms are often due to the carelessness with which those belonging to them ask peace from God—as well as to the fact that they show little gratitude when God has granted it to them.

Worldly wars have such strange sequels and such disastrous effects upon the soul itself, that they could never be feared enough. That is why Saint Paul, as he urges us to pray for the kings of the world, clearly states as a principle of that obligation the need we ourselves have of external tranquillity: *ut quietam & tranquillam vitam agamus*. (1 Tim. 2:1–2)

One brings peace to oneself thanks to the ordering of one's thoughts and passions. And with this internal peace, one contributes much to the

peace of the society in which one lives; for hardly anything but passions disrupt it. But because this peace we keep with those bound to us through closer ties and through a more frequent commerce<sup>o</sup> is extremely important to have us keep the peace within ourselves; and because this peace can be disrupted by nothing but the discord opposed to it, it has to be the one mainly referred to in the prophet's precept: *Quaerite pacem civitatis ad quam transmigrare vos feci*. Seek the peace of the city which is the place of your exile. (Jer. 29:7)

## Chapter XV

*On the fundamental reasons why civility is a duty.*

Men believe that civility is due them, and indeed it is due them the way it is practiced in the world; but they do not know the reason why. If they had no other right to require it than that given by custom, they would not be entitled to it; for it is not enough to bind others to perform certain tedious tasks. One must go further back to the source, as is the case when gratitude is concerned. And if it is true, as a man of God puts it, that there is no one as civil as a good Christian, there must be some divine reasons for it, and what we are about to say may help to uncover them.

Let us therefore consider that men are bound together by an infinity of needs, which oblige them to live in society by necessity—no one being able to do without others. And this society is in accordance with the order of God, because it allows such needs to [fulfill] this end. So everything that is necessary to preserve this society belongs to that order, which is, as it were, under God's command, thanks to this natural law compelling each part to preserve its whole. Now, in order for the society of men to survive, it is absolutely necessary that they love and respect one another; for contempt and hatred are sure causes of disunity. There are an infinity of small things which are extremely necessary for us to live, and can be given for free; and which cannot be traded so that they can be purchased only by love. Besides, this society is composed of men who love themselves, and who are full of self-complacency, so that, if they are not careful to please and treat one another gently, they will end up forming a bunch of people who will be discontented with one another, and

who will not be able to remain united. But since the love and esteem we have for one another cannot be seen, men have taken it into their heads to establish between them certain duties, which would testify to their respect and affection. And it necessarily arises from this that to neglect these duties is to express a disposition opposed to love and respect. Therefore, we owe those external actions to the people to whom we owe the disposition they express. And we offend them when we neglect them, for this omission expresses feelings we should not be having towards them.

So one can and one even must be punctilious in performing the duties of civility men have established. And the reasons for that are not only just, but they are also founded on the law of God. One must do so in order to avoid giving the impression that one feels contempt or indifference towards those for whom one will not perform these duties; to preserve human society, to which it is only fair that everyone contributes, since everyone draws considerable advantages from it; and finally, to avoid the internal or external rebukes of those towards whom one would not perform these duties, for those rebukes are the sources of the divisions disrupting the tranquillity of life and the Christian peace dealt with in this discourse.

## Vol. 2: On Christian Civility

### Chapter I

*How self-love produces civility.*

There is nothing more natural for men than the desire to be loved by others, because there is nothing more natural than to love oneself. Now one always wants what one loves to be loved. Charity, which loves God, wishes God to be loved by all creatures; and cupidity, which loves itself, would wish us to be loved by all men.

We wish to be loved in order to love ourselves even more. The love others feel towards us leads us to regard ourselves as worthier of love, and the mental picture we have of ourselves presents itself to us in a more

agreeable way. We are most pleased that they judge us as we judge ourselves, because our judgement, which is weak and timid when it stands by itself, becomes more assured when it is supported by that of others; and thus one attaches it to oneself with all the more delight as it is less troubled by the fear of being mistaken.

But the love others feel for us is not only the object of our vanity and the nourishment of our self-esteem; it is also where our weakness lies. Our soul is so languid and weak that it could not possibly remain strong, if it were not, as it were, supported by the approval and love of men. And this may be easily acknowledged when one imagines a situation in which everyone would condemn us, in which no one would consider us except with hatred and contempt, in which all men in general were to forget about us. For who could bear this sight without feeling horror, despondency, and despair? Now if this sight is a cause of despondency for us, it must be that the opposite sight is of some support to us—without our even thinking about it.

Since the love of men is so necessary to support us, we are naturally drawn to seek it and obtain it. And because we know by experience that we love those who love us, either we love or we pretend to love others in order to attract their affection in return. It is the foundation of human civility, which is only a sort of commerce<sup>o</sup> of self-love, in which one endeavours to arouse the love of others by displaying some affection towards them.

Those displays of affection are usually false and excessive; in other words, one displays more affection than one feels, because the self-love which attaches us to ourselves, quite diverts us from the love of others; instead of true affection, one uses a substitute—a language of affection, which is always well-received, because one is always well-disposed to listen to everything that is said in our favor with a kindly ear. And therefore, one may say of all those speeches of civility—which are so commonly delivered by the worldly types, but are so far removed from the feelings of their hearts—that: *Vana locuti sunt unusquisque ad proximum suum: Labia dolosa in corde & corde locuti sunt*; Everyone speaks and converses with his fellow men only about vain subjects: their lips are full of deceit, and they speak with a double heart. (Ps. 11.3)

## Discourse Containing a Digest of Natural Proofs of the Existence of God and the Immortality of the Soul

But it is at least certain that a spirit could never appear, as we have shown, and that matter, since it is deprived of thought, will never recognize itself as being differently organized. So one must necessarily confess both that men are new, and that—because all bodily nature is incapable of creating a man—he, as a mortal, could only be created by a more powerful being than nature.

Hence all the inventions of men have a touch of novelty about them, and disavow eternity. We see nothing in the world that looks more ancient than is claimed by the Holy Scriptures. There is no historian earlier than four thousand years ago. Since that time, one has witnessed a perpetual progress in the world, similar to the progress made by a man coming out of childhood and going through all the other ages of life.

Varro<sup>1</sup> testifies to the fact that, among the arts that existed in the world when he was writing, none was more than a thousand years old. Men have always moved forward to find new ways of relieving themselves from necessity; and as we go further back, we always find inventions more imperfect, and men more deprived. We know the origins of almost all the arts, the sciences, the cities, empires and administrations [*polices*°].

I know that an author has just put together the new inventions of recent centuries with several lost inventions from antiquity in a book he entitled: *Vetera deperdita, Nova reperta*.<sup>2</sup> But one can note in this book that those ancient inventions were not very useful, and that they are made good by new inventions which are even nicer and easier, whereas those which have been found recently are, on the one hand, so convenient that it is impossible for them to disappear; and on the other hand, they are so easy that it is strange how long it took to discover them.

For instance, what is more convenient for man's life than the art of us-

1. [Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.), Roman scholar and encyclopedist.]

2. [The reference may be to Guido Panciroli (1523–99), *Raccolta di alcune cose più segnalate* (Venice, 1612); tr. into Latin as *Nova reperta, sive Rerum memorabilium recens inventarum* by H. Salmuth (1599–1602; 1660 ed.).]

ing these two great elements of nature for his work—wind and water? Most things can only be done nowadays thanks to the forces we borrow from those two bodies. The slightest knowledge of mechanics seems to lead us naturally to draw from them the uses we actually draw from them, since we only search for the forces, the application never being difficult.

One may say with certainty that men will never be so foolish as to be reduced to using only the strength of their arms to do what they can do so conveniently thanks to water and wind. Thus, the invention of wind-mills can never perish. And yet this invention, which is so useful, is not very ancient, as it appears that before Pliny's time, one had no other means to grind grain than to turn a millstone by the strength of one's arms or with animals.<sup>3</sup> And even though it seems that, according to this author, there were in his time certain water-powered millstones, the way he speaks of it nevertheless shows that this invention was then far from perfect and far from widespread, since he only mentions it as the least ordinary means to grind grain; whereas whenever it has been well known, it has abolished all other means.

There is also nothing simpler and more natural than printing; and there is no point in fearing that this art which makes all things eternal might ever perish. But one may truly admire how we have been so long without finding it. The ancients used to engrave copper. Hence it was easy for them to imagine that if they printed on paper what they had engraved, they could write in an instant what had taken so long to engrave. If they had been struck by this idea and had followed it, they would not have remained long without perfecting it and without finding the blend of ink necessary for printing. And yet it has only been two hundred years since we became aware of this invention, which was destined to become eternal [even] if the world were to last forever.

And cannot the same be said of cannon powder? Can we not claim how useful it is for hunting and war, and how a gun is more convenient to shoot a bird than bows and crossbows? And how many inconvenient and quite inefficient machines have we been ridden of thanks to our cannons and our mines? In the past, one had almost no other means to take towns fortified with good walls than to raise heaps of earth in order to

3. Pliny [the Elder], *Natural History*, bk. 18, ch. 10.

fight hand to hand. The smallest places used to stop a victorious army for six months; and Caesar and Alexander, despite all their valor, could never have taken one of the fortified towns of the Netherlands within a year. Men are too mean ever to forget an invention which backs up their passions so well. Its substance has always been exposed to their sight. Its preparation is not difficult. Experimenting with it was easy; and yet it has not been in the world for long.

The compass has such strange uses that it alone has given us the knowledge of a new world, and now links all the peoples on earth through trade. It is so simple that one can really marvel at the fact that men were able to go so long without finding it. For since the magnet's property of attracting iron has always existed—which has often led us to have magnets touch iron—it is difficult to understand how it is that men never, either by accident or on purpose, observed some needle (either loose or dangling) as it is touched by the magnet. For they would have then recognized that it always turns towards the same side. The same thing would have happened if they had hung the magnet to a thread; for they would have also seen that it always turns one of its sides towards one pole, and the other side towards the other pole.

All those inventions and many others are so simple that it is impossible that the world could have lived so long without finding them, and they are so convenient that it is even more impossible they will ever perish once found. Therefore it is obvious that, being new, they are palpable proofs of the fact that men are new, since men would never have failed to discover them sooner if there had always been men, and since men would have never let them disappear once they had been found.

So everything we can see in the world leads us to believe that it has not always existed, and that there has been a being above the world who has created all other beings. And it is in vain that atheists object that this being is incomprehensible, and that we are admitting what we cannot conceive of; for since [this being] is infinite, it is not surprising that it should supersede the capacity of our finite and limited minds. Our reason can go so far as to understand that there are things that are, even though they are incomprehensible. But as soon as this one incomprehensible being is acknowledged, all nature becomes in some sense comprehensible. And



there are no more difficulties accounting through reason for an infinity of things which are unexplainable without that. Matter is, because God created it. Movement is, because God has produced it and preserves it. This body is in this place because—since God created it in a certain place—it has come to this one through a series of changes which are not infinite. There are thinking beings because God creates them when he sees bodies prepared to receive them. Mountains are not levelled down, because the world has not lasted long enough yet since its creation to produce that effect. There are men because they were born of a man and a woman whom God created six thousand years ago. There are animals, because God also fashioned those animated machines when he created the world, and provided them with the means to multiply themselves and preserve their species by begetting new generations. There are no histories going back beyond four thousand years ago, for since the world just began six thousand years ago or so, it is not surprising that men first focused on arts that were useful to the preservation of their lives, rather than on writing and making out stories. All that is in perfect accord with what the Scriptures teach us about the Deity and the creation of the world.

But those who, wishing to confine all things within the narrow limits of their minds, refuse to acknowledge this incomprehensible being because they do not understand it, do not for all that avoid the disadvantage they object to in us without any reason; on the contrary, they heighten it. Without an incomprehensible being, which they reject, the world and all its parts become incomprehensible to them. They are obliged to admit that, for everything, there is an infinite succession of causes dependent on one another, without ever finding a first and independent cause, even though there is nothing more incomprehensible and contrary to reason. Why is this man here? It is because he was born of a father, and this father was born of another, and so on *ad infinitum*. Why is this lion on earth? It is because it was born of that other lion, and so on *ad infinitum*. Why is this part of matter in this place? It is because it has been pushed out of that other place, and so on *ad infinitum*. Infinity is everywhere, and thus incomprehensibility is everywhere. Hence their minds are obliged to yield to the slightest thing, as they refuse to bow to the one to whom it is just and glorious to yield.

## Discourse, Where It Is Made Clear How the Conversations of Men Are Dangerous

### Chapter III

*How common language is the language of concupiscence.*

The corruption which arises from language is all the greater in that the wicked are infinitely more numerous than the good. In addition, because the good have not always been so, and are not perfectly so, since they have within them the remains of natural corruption, common language is well and truly the language of concupiscence, which predominates in it and rules it. It always connects the ideas of greatness or pettiness, contempt or esteem to objects just as concupiscence represents them. Thus, it is not surprising that, since it makes us see things as concupiscence does, it triggers and nurtures within us all the movements that arise from those false ideas formed by concupiscence.

Therefore, there is no one who could find a reason for moaning about those wounds men's words have inflicted on his mind, and who could not truly say to God that *the words of the wicked have prevailed over him*. They have prevailed over us when we were young and unable to resist, and they constantly prevail over us through the intelligence they can find in our minds, as they have us see things differently from what they really are—either bigger or smaller than they are.

For one must not imagine that wishing to belong to God, and even actually converting oneself, can entirely reform this corruption of the mind and enable us to appraise each thing for what it is really worth. It is true that, by devoting oneself to God, one prefers him to all other creatures, but this preference is still very small, and does not correspond at all to the disproportion between God and creation, between eternal and worldly things. God often barely gets the better of objects of concupiscence. We continue to prize the advantages of the world infinitely more than they deserve. We are still close to the perfect balance, and if we put a little more weight on the scales—that is to say, if we slightly increased the im-

pression the things of the world have upon our minds—these would easily regain their influence and get the better of God.

Now nothing is more capable of producing that disastrous effect than the speeches delivered by the men of the world [*les hommes du monde*], because they constantly revive those false ideas we have about earthly things; because they always present godly things with this obscurantist pettiness which leads them to be despised by so many people; and because they thus constantly reopen our wounds. That is why no precept is more important than that given by the Sage in the following words: *Watch out for yourself, and pay attention to what you hear for your fate depends on it: Cave tibi, & attende diligenter auditui tuo, quoniam cum subversione tua ambulas.* (Eccli. 13.16) Our falls usually come from our false judgements, our false judgements come from our false impressions, and those false impressions come from the commerce<sup>o</sup> we have with one another through language. It is the ill-fated chain which plunges us into hell.



*A Discourse of Trade*  
1690

NICHOLAS BARBON was born in London in 1623. He studied medicine at the University of Leiden in 1661, receiving his M.D. at Utrecht and becoming an honorary fellow of the College of Physicians in 1664. He then became a real estate developer, and after the fire of London in 1666, he is said to have introduced fire insurance to England. Barbon developed whole sections of London in both commercial and residential real estate. He was elected a member of Parliament in 1690 and in 1695. He also took part in the land-bank speculations of the time, founding his own land-bank. He died in 1698, after directing in his will that none of his debts be paid.

In addition to the work included here, he wrote an essay on money in response to Locke in 1696, arguing for devaluing the silver currency. He was known also for arguing against the “balance” of trade. The edition used here is Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade*, edited by Jacob H. Hollander (1690; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1905), and is reprinted in its entirety. One of the best-known early tracts for freedom of trade, it also discusses topics as varied as the nature of value, the role of fashion in economic life, the importance of moral dispositions such as emulation and vanity, industry and liberality in commerce, and the political effects and implications of commerce. Unbracketed notes are by Hollander; bracketed material is by the present editor.

# A Discourse of Trade

## The Preface

The Greatness and Riches of the UNITED PROVINCES, and STATES OF VENICE, Consider'd, with the little Tract of Ground that belongs to either of their TERRITORIES, sufficiently Demonstrate the great Advantage and Profit that Trade brings to a Nation.

And since the Old Ammunition and Artillery of the GRECIANS and ROMANS are grown out of Use; such as Stones, Bows, Arrows, and battering Rams, with other Wooden Engines, which were in all Places easily procured or made: And the Invention of Gunpowder hath introduced another sort of Ammunition and Artillery, whose Materials are made of Minerals, that are not to be found in all Countries; such as Iron, Brass, Lead, Salt-petre, and Brimstone; and therefore where they are wanting, must be procured by Traffick. TRADE is now become as necessary to Preserve Governments, as it is useful to make them Rich.

And notwithstanding the great Influence, that TRADE now hath in the Support and Welfare of States and Kingdoms, yet there is nothing more unknown, or that Men differ more in their Sentiments, than about the True Causes that raise and promote TRADE.

LIVY, and those Antient Writers, whose elevated GENIUS set them upon the Inquiries into the Causes of the Rise and Fall of Governments, have been very exact in describing the several Forms of Military Discipline, but take no Notice of TRADE; and MACHIAVEL a Modern Writer, and the best, though he lived in a Government, where the Family of MEDICIS had advanced themselves to the Sovereignty by their Riches, acquired by Merchandizing, doth not mention TRADE, as any way interested in the Affairs of State; for until TRADE became necessary to provide Weapons of War, it was always thought Prejudicial to the Growth of Empire, as too much softening the People by Ease and Luxury, which made their Bodies unfit to Endure the Labour and Hardships of War. And therefore the ROMANS who made War, (the only Way to Raise & Enlarge their Dominion) did in the almost Infancy of their

State, Conquer that Rich and TRADING City of CARTHAGE, though Defended by HANIBAL their General, one of the greatest Captains in the World: so that, since TRADE was not in those days useful to provide Magazines for Wars, an Account of it is not to be expected from those Writers. The Merchant, and other Traders who should understand the true Interest of TRADE, do either not understand it, or else, lest it might hinder their private Gain, will not Discover<sup>1</sup> it. Mr. MUNN a Merchant, in his Treatise of TRADE,<sup>2</sup> doth better set forth the Rule to make an Accomplished Merchant, than how it may be most Profitable to the Nation; and those Arguments every day met with from the Traders, seem byassed with Private Interest, and run contrary to one another, as their Interest are opposite.

The TURKEY-Merchants Argue against the EAST-INDIA-COMPANY, the WOOLLEN-DRAPER against the MERCERS, and the UPHOLSTER against the CAIN-CHAIR-MAKER; some think there are too many TRADERS, and Complain against the Number of BUILDERS; others against the Number of ALE-HOUSES; some use Argumen's for the Sole making of particular Commodities, others Plead for the Sole Trading to particular Countries: So that, if these Gentlemens Reasons might prevail in getting those Laws they so much sollicite, (which all of them Affirm, would be for the Advance of TRADE, and Publick Good of the Nation) there would be but a few TRADES left for the next Generation of Men to be Employ'd in, a much fewer sorts of Goods to make, and not a Corner of the World to Trade to, unless they purchase a License from them.

And how fair and convincing soever their Premises may appear for the Inlarging and Advancement of TRADE, the Conclusions of their Arguments, which are for Limiting and Confining of it to Number, Persons and Places, are directly opposite to the Inlarging of it.

The Reasons why many Men have not a true IDEA of TRADE, is, Be-

1. [Reveal.]

2. "England's Treasure by Forraign Trade. Or, The Balance of our Forraign Trade is The Rule of our Treasure" (London, 1664); see chapter I ('The knowledge and qualities, which are required to be in a perfect Merchant of forraign trade').

cause they Apply their Thoughts to particular Parts of TRADE, wherein they are chiefly concerned in Interest; and having found out the best Rules and Laws for forming that particular Part, they govern their Thoughts by the same Notions in forming the Great Body of TRADE, and not Reflecting on the different Rules of Proportions betwixt the Body and Parts, have a very disagreeable Conception; and like those, who having learnt to Draw well an Eye, Ear, Hand, and other Parts of the Body, (being Unskilful in the Laws of Symmetry) when they joyn them together, make a very Deformed Body.

Therefore, whoever will make a true Representation of TRADE, must Draw a rough Sketch of the Body and Parts together, which though it will not entertain with so much Pleasure as a well-finish't Piece, yet the Agreeableness of the Parts may be as well discern'd, and thereby such Measures taken, as may best suit the Shape of the Body.

### Of Trade and the *Stock*, or Wares of Trade.

Trade is the Making, and Selling of one sort of Goods for another; The making is called Handy-Craft Trade, and the maker an Artificer; The Selling is called Merchandizing, and the Seller a Merchant: The Artificer is called by several Names from the sort of Goods he makes. As a Clothier, Silk-weaver, Shoo-maker, or Hatter, &c. from Making of Cloth, Silk, Shooes, or Hats; And the Merchant is distinguished by the Names of the Countrey he deals to, and is called, *Dutch, French, Spanish* or *Turkey* Merchant.

The chief End or Business of Trade, is to make a profitable Bargain: In making of a Bargain there are these things to be considered; The Wares to be Sold, the Quantity and Quality of those Wares, the Value or Price of them, the Money or Credit, by which the Wares are bought, the Interest that relates to the time of performing the Bargain.

The Stock and Wares of all Trade are the Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals of the whole Universe, whatsoever the Land or Sea produceth. These Wares may be divided into Natural and Artificial; Natural Wares are those which are sold as Nature Produceth them; As Flesh, Fish, and

Fruits, &c. Artificial Wares are those which by Art are Changed into another Form than Nature gave them; As Cloth, Calicoes, and wrought Silks, &c. which are made of Wool, Flax, Cotten, and Raw Silks.

Both these Sorts of Wares are called the Staple Commodities of those Countreys where they chiefly abound, or are made. There are Different Climates of the Heavens, some very Hot, some very Cold, others Temperate; these Different Climates produce Different Animals, Vegetables, & Minerals. The Staples of the hot Country are Spices; the Staples of the Cold, Furrs; but the more Temperate Climates produce much the same sorts of Commodities; but by difference of the Quality or Conveniency of place where they abound, they become the Staple of each Country, where they are either best or easier acquired or exchanged: Thus, *Herrings*, and other Fish are the Staples of *Holland*; the *Dutch* living amongst the Water, are most naturally inclined to Fishing: *English* Wool being the best in the World, is the Staple of *England*, for the same reason. Oyles of *Italy*, Fruits of *Spain*, Wine of *France*, with several other sorts of Commodities, are the Staples of their several Countreys.

Staple Commodities may be divided into Native or Forreign; the Native Staple is what Each Country doth Naturally and best produce; Forreign Staple, is any Forreign Commodity, which a Country acquires by the sole *Trade* to a Forreign Place, or sole possession of a particular Art; as Spices are the Staple of *Holland*; and the making of Glass and Paper, were the Staple of *Venice*.

From the Stock, or Wares of *Trade*, these Three Things are Observable:

1. The Native Staple of each Country is the Riches of the Country, and is perpetual, and never to be consumed; Beasts of the Earth, Fowls of the Air, and Fishes of the Sea, Naturally Increase: There is Every Year a New Spring and Autumn, which produceth a New Stock of Plants and Fruits. And the Minerals of the Earth are Unexhaustable; and if the Natural Stock be Infinite, the Artificial Stock that is made of the Natural, must be Infinite, as Woollen and Linnen Cloth, Calicoes, and wrought Silk, which are made of Flax, Wool, Cotton, and Raw Silks.

This sheweth a Mistake of Mr. *Munn*, in his Discourse of *Trade*,<sup>3</sup> who commends Parsimony, Frugality, and Sumptuary Laws, as the means to

3. [London, 1621; repr. New York, 1930.]



make a Nation Rich; and uses an Argument, from a *Simile*, supposing a Man to have 1000 *l.* per *Annum*, and 2000 *l.* in a Chest, and spends Yearly 1500 *l.* per *Annum*, he will in four Years time Waste his 2000 *l.*<sup>4</sup> This is true, of a Person, but not of a Nation; because his Estate is Finite, but the Stock of a Nation Infinite, and can never be consumed; For what is Infinite, can neither receive Addition by Parsimony, nor suffer Diminution, by Prodigality.

2. The Native Staple of Each Country, is the Foundation of it's Foreign Trade: And no Nation have any Forreign Commodities, but what are at first brought in by the Exchange of the Native; for at the first beginning of Forreign Trade, a Nation hath nothing else to Exchange; The Silver & Gold from *Spain*; the Silks from *Turkey*, Oyls from *Italy*, Wine from *France*, and all other Forreign Goods are brought into *England*, by the Exchange of the *English* Cloth, or some other Staple of *England*.

3. That Forreign Staples are uncertain Wealth: Some Countries by the Sole Trade to another Country, or by the Sole Possession of some Arts, gain a Staple of Forreign Commodities, which may be as profitable as the Native, so long as they enjoy the Sole possession of that Trade or Art. But that is uncertain; for other Nations find out the way of Trading to the same place: The Artists for Advantage, Travel into other Countries, and the Arts are discover'd. Thus *Portugal* had the Sole Trade of *India*; afterwards the *Venetians* got a great Share of the Trade, and now the *Dutch* and *English*, have a greater share than both: The Arts of making several sorts of Silks, were chiefly confined to *Genoa*, & *Naples*; afterward Travelled into *France*, since into *England* and *Holland*, and are now Practised there in as great perfection as they were in *Italy*; So have other Arts wander'd, as the making of Looking-Glasses from *Venice* into *England*, the making of Paper from *Venice* into *France* and *Holland*.

## Of the Quantity and Quality of Wares.

The Quantity of all Wares are known by Weight or Measure. The Reason of Gravity is not understood, neither is it Material to this Purpose;

4. [*England's Treasure*] chap. II ('The means to enrich the Kingdom, and to encrease our Treasure').

Whether it proceeds from the Elastisity of the Air, or Weight of the utmost Spheer, or from what other Causes, its sufficient, that the ways of Trying the Weights of Bodies are perfectly discover'd by the Ballance. There are Two Sorts of Weights in Common Use, the *Troy*, and *Averdupois*.<sup>5</sup>

The First are used to Weigh Goods of most Value, as Gold, Silver and Silk, &c. The Latter for Coarser, and more Bulky Goods, as Lead, Iron, &c.

There are Two Sorts of Measures, the one for Fluid Bodies, as the Bushel, Gallon and Quart, for Measuring Corn, Wine and Oyl; the other for the Measuring the Dimensions of Solid Bodies, as a Yard, Ell, &c. to Measure Cloth, Silk, &c.

The Weights and Measures of all Countries differs, but that is no Prejudice to *Trade*; they are all made certain by the Custom or Laws of the Place, and the Trader knows the Weight or Measure in Use, in the Place he Deals to. It is the Care of the Government, to prevent and punish the Fraud of False Weights and Measures, and in most Trading-Cities, there are Publick Weigh-Houses, and Measurers: The Fraud of the Ballance, which is from the unequal Length of the end of the Beam, is least perceivable; and therefore in Weighing Goods of Value, they usually Weigh them in both Scales.

The Qualities of Wares are known by their Colour, Sound, Smell, Taste, Make, or Shape.

The Difference in the Qualities of Wares are very difficultly distinguished; those Organs that are the proper Judges of those Differencies, do very much disagree; some Men have clearer Eyes, some more distinguishing Ears, and other nicer Noses and Tastes; and every Man having a good Opinion of his own Faculties, it is hard to find a Judge to determine which is best: Besides, those Qualities that belong to Artificial Wares, such as depend upon the Mixture, Make or Shape of them, are more difficultly discover'd: Those Wares, whose Quality are produced by the just Mixture of different Bodies, such as Knives and Razors, whose sharpness arise from the Good Temperament and Mixture of the Steel

5. [In Troy weight, a pound is 12 ounces, an ounce is 20 pennyweights, and a pennyweight is 24 grains. In Averdupois, a pound is 16 ounces.]

& Iron, are not to be found out, but by the Use of them: And so doth the Mixture, and well making of Hats, Cloth, and many other things.

Because the Difference in the Qualities of Wares, are so difficultly understood, it is that the Trader serves an Apprenticeship to learn them; and the Knowledge of them is called the Mystery of Trade; and in common Dealing, the Buyer is forced to rely on the Skill and Honesty of the Seller, to deliver Wares with such Qualities as he affirms them to have: It is the Sellers Interest, from the Expectation of further Dealing, not to deceive; because his Shop, the Place of Dealing, is known: Therefore, those Persons that buy of Pedlars, and Wandering People, run Great Hazard of being Cheated.

Those Wares, whose Chief Qualities consist in Shape, such as all Wearing Apparel, do not so much depend upon the Honesty of the Seller; for tho' the Trader or Maker, is the Inventor of the Shape, yet it is the Fancy and Approbation of the Buyer, that brings it into Use, and makes it pass for a Fashion.

## Of the Value and Price of Wares.

The Value of all Wares arise from their Use; Things of no Use, have no Value, as the *English* Phrase is, *They are good for nothing*.

The Use of Things, are to supply the Wants and Necessities of Man: There are Two General Wants that Mankind is born with; the Wants of the Body, and the Wants of the Mind; To supply these two Necessities, all things under the Sun become useful, and therefore have a Value.

Wares, useful to supply the Wants of the Body, are all things necessary to support Life, such are in Common Estimation; all those Goods which are useful to supply the Three General Necessities of Man, Food, Clothes and Lodging; But if strictly Examined, nothing is absolutely necessary to support Life, but Food; for a great Part of Mankind go Naked, and lye in Huts and Caves; so that there are but few things that are absolutely necessary to supply the Wants of the Body.

Wares, that have their Value from supplying the Wants of the Mind, are all such things that can satisfie Desire; Desire implys Want: It is the Appetite of the Soul, and is as natural to the Soul, as Hunger to the Body.

The Wants of the Mind are infinite, Man naturally Aspires, and as his Mind is elevated, his Senses grow more refined, and more capable of Delight; his Desires are enlarged, and his Wants increase with his Wishes, which is for every thing that is rare, can gratifie his Senses, adorn his Body, and promote the Ease, Pleasure, and Pomp of Life.

Amongst the great Variety of things to satisfy the Wants of the Mind, those that adorn Mans Body, and advance the Pomp of Life, have the most general Use, and in all Ages, and amongst all sorts of Mankind, have been of Value.

The first Effects that the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge wrought upon the Parents of Mankind, was to make them cloath themselves, and it has made the most Visible Distinction of his Race, from the rest of the Creation: It is that by which his Posterity may write Man, for no Creatures adorn the Body but Man: Beside, the decking of the Body, doth not onely distinguish Man from Beast, but is the Mark of Difference and Superiority betwixt Man and Man.

There was never any part of Mankind so wild and barbarous, but they had Difference and Degree of Men amongst them, and invented some things to shew that Distinction.

Those that Cloathed with Skins, wore the Skins of those Beasts that are most difficultly taken; thus *Hercules* wore a Lyons Skin; and the *Ermins* and *Sable*, are still Badges of Honour. The Degree of Quality amongst the *Affricans*, is known by the waste Cloth, and amongst those that go naked, by adorning their Bodies with Colours, most rare amongst them, as the Red was the Colour most in Esteem amongst the Ancient *Britains*.

And the most Ancient and best of Histories, the Bible, shews, That amongst the Civilized People of the World, Ear-Rings, Bracelets, Hoods and Vails, with Changeable Suits of Apparel, were then worn: And the same Ornaments for the Body are still, and ever since have been Worn, only differing in Shapes and Fashions, according to the Custom of the Country.

The Shapes of Habits are much in use, to denote the Qualities of several men; but things rare and difficult to be obtained, are General Badges of Honour: From this Use, Pearls, Diamonds, and Precious Stones, have

their Value: Things Rare are proper Ensigs of Honour, because it is Honourable to acquire Things Difficult.

The Price of Wares is the present Value; And ariseth by Computing the occasions or use for them, with the Quantity to serve that Occasion; for the Value of things depending on the use of them, the *Over-pluss* of Those Wares, which are more than can be used, become worth nothing; So that Plenty, in respect of the occasion, makes things cheap; and Scarcity, dear.

There is no fixt Price or Value of any thing for the Wares of *Trades*; The Animals, and Vegetables of the Earth, depend on the Influence of Heaven, which sometimes causes Murrains,<sup>6</sup> Dearth, Famine, and sometimes Years of great Plenty; therefore, the Value of things must accordingly Alter. Besides, the Use of most things being to supply the Wants of the Mind, and not the Necessitys of the Body; and those Wants, most of them proceeding from imagination, the Mind Changeth; the things grow out of Use, and so lose their Value.

There are two ways by which the value of things are a little guessed at; by the Price of the Merchant, and the Price of the Artificer: The Price that the Merchant sets upon his Wares, is by reckoning Prime Cost, Charges and Interest.

The Price of the Artificer, is by reckoning the Cost of the Materials, with the time of working them; The Price of Time is according to the Value of the Art, and the Skill of the Artist. Some Artificers Reckon Twelve, others Fifteen, and some Twenty, and Thirty Shillings *per* Week.

Interest is the Rule that the Merchant Trades by; And Time, the Artificer, By which they cast up Profit, and Loss; for if the Price of their Wares, so alter either by Plenty, or by Change of the Use, that they do not pay the Merchant Interest, nor the Artificer for his Time, they both reckon they lose by their Trade.

But the Market is the best Judge of Value; for by the Concourse of Buyers and Sellers, the Quantity of Wares, and the Occasion for them are Best known: Things are just worth so much, as they can be sold for, according to the Old Rule, *Valet Quantum Vendi potest*.

6. [Plague in cattle.]

## Of Mony, Credit and Interest.

Mony is a Value made by a Law; And the Difference of its Value is known by the Stamp, and Size of the Piece.

One Use of Mony is, It is the Measure of Value, By which the Value of all other things are reckoned; as when the Value of any thing is expressed, its said, It's worth so many shillings, or so many Pounds: Another Use of Mony is; It is a Change or Pawn for the Value of all other Things: For this Reason, the Value of Mony must be made certain by Law, or else it could not be made a certain Measure, nor an Exchange for the Value of all things.

It is not absolutely necessary, Mony should be made of Gold or Silver; for having its sole Value from the Law, it is not Material upon what Metal the Stamp be set. Money hath the same Value, and performs the same Uses, if it be made of Brass, Copper, Tin, or any thing else. The Brass Mony of *Spain*, the Copper Mony of *Sweeden*, and Tin Farthings of *England*, have the same Value in Exchange, according to the Rate they are set at and perform the same Uses, to Cast up the Value of things, as the Gold and Silver Mony does; Six Pence in Farthings will buy the same thing as Six Pence in Silver; and the Value of a thing is well understood by saying, It is worth Eight Farthings, as that it is worth Two Pence: Gold and Silver, as well as Brass, Copper and Tin Mony, change their Value in those Countries, where the Law has no Force, and yield no more than the Price of the Metal that bears the Stamp: Therefore, all Foreign Coins go by Weight, and are of no certain Value, but rise and fall with the Price of the Metal. Pieces of Eight, yield sometimes 4 *sh.* 6 *d.* 4 *sh.* 7 *d.* and 4 *sh.* 8 *d.* as the Value of Silver is higher or lower: And so doth Dollars, and all Forreign Coin, change their Value; and were it not for the Law that fixeth the Value, an *English* Crown Piece would now yield Five Shillings and Two Pence, for so much is the Value of it, if it were melted, or in a Foreign Country. But the chief Advantage of making Mony of Silver and Gold, is to prevent Counterfeiting; for Silver and Gold, being Metals of great Value, those who design Profit by Counterfeiting the Coin, must Counterfeit the Metals, as well as the Stamp, which is more difficult than the Stamp. There's another Benefit to the Merchant, by such Mony; for Gold and Silver being Commodities for

other Uses, than to make Mony; to make Plate, Gold & Silver Lace, Silks, &c. And Coins of little Bulk, in respect of their Value, the Merchant transmits such Mony from Place to Place, in *Specie*, according as he finds his Advantage, by the Rise of Bullion; though this may be a Conveniency to the Merchant, it often proves a Prejudice to the State, by making Mony scarce: Therefore, there are Laws in most Countries, that Prohibit the Transportation of Mony, yet it cannot be prevented; for in *Spain*, though it be Capital, yet in Two Months after the Gallions are come home, there is scarce any Silver Mony to be seen in the Country.

Some Men have so great an Esteem for Gold and Silver, that they believe they have an intrinsick Value in themselves, and cast up the value of every thing by them: The Reason of the Mistake, is, Because Mony being made of Gold and Silver, they do not distinguish betwixt Mony, and Gold and Silver. Mony hath a certain Value, because of the Law; but the Value of Gold and Silver are uncertain, & varies their Price, as much as Copper, Lead, or other Metals: And in the Places where they are dug, considering the smalness of their Veins, with the Charges of getting them, they do not yield much more Profit than other Minerals, nor pay the Miners better Wages for digging them.

And were it not for the Waste, made of Gold and Silver, by Plate, Lace, Silks, and Guilding, and the Custom of the *Eastern* Princes, to lay them up and bury them, that Half which is dug in the *West*, is buried in the *East*. The great Quantities dug out of the Earth, since the Discovery of the *West-Indies*, would have so much lessened the Value, that by this time, they would not have much exceeded the Value of Tin, or Copper: Therefore, How greatly would those Gentlemen be disappointed, that are searching after the *Philosopher's Stone*,<sup>7</sup> if they should at last happen to find it? For, if they should make but so great a Quantity of Gold and Silver, as they, and their Predecessors have spent in search after it, it would so alter, and bring down the Price of those Metals, that it might be a Question, whether they would get so much *Over-plus* by it, as would pay for the Metal they change into Gold and Silver. It is only the Scarcity that keeps up the Value, and not any Intrinsick Vertue or Quality in the Metals; For if the Vertue were to be considered, the *Affrican* that gives

7. [Alchemist's stone thought to convert base metals into gold.]

Gold for Knives, and Things made of Iron, would have the Odds in the Exchange; Iron being a much more Useful Metal, than either Gold or Silver. To Conclude this Objection, Nothing in it self hath a certain Value; One thing is as much worth as another: And it is time, and place, that give a difference to the Value of all things.

Credit is a Value raised by Opinion, it buys Goods as Mony doe's; and in all Trading Citys, there's more Wares sold upon Credit, then for present Mony.

There are Two Sorts of Credit; the one, is Grounded upon the Ability of the Buyer; the other, upon the Honesty: The first is called a Good Man, which implies an Able Man; he generally buys upon short Time; to pay in a Month, which is accounted as ready Mony, and the Price is made accordingly. The other is accounted an Honest Man; He may be poor; he Generally buys for three and Six Months or longer, so as to pay the Merchant by the Return of his own Goods; and therefore, the Seller relays more upon the Honesty of the Buyer, than his Ability: Most of the Retail Traders buy upon this Sort of Credit, and are usually Trusted for more than double they are worth.

In Citys of great Trade, there are publick Banks of Credit, as at *Amsterdam* and *Venice*: They are of great Advantage to Trade, for they make Payments easie, by preventing the Continual Trouble of telling<sup>8</sup> over Mony, and cause a great Dispatch in Business: Publick Banks are of so great a Concern in Trade, that the Merchants of *London*, for want of such a Bank, have been forced to Carry their Cash to Gold-Smiths, and have thereby Raised such a Credit upon Gold-Smiths Notes, that they pass in Payments from one to another like Notes upon the Bank; And although by this way of Credit, there hath been very Vast Sums of Mony lost, not less then too Millions within five and Twenty Years, yet the Dispatch and Ease in Trade is so great by such Notes, that the Credit is still in some Measure kept up.

Therefore, it is much to be wondered at, that since the City of *London* is the Largest, Richest, and Chiefest City in the World, for Trade; Since there is so much Ease, Dispatch, and Safety in a Publick Bank; and since such vast Losses has Happened for want of it; That the Merchant and

8. [Counting or numbering.]



Traders of *London* have not long before this time Addressed themselves, to the Government, for the Establishing of a Publick Bank.

The Common Objection, that a Publick Bank cannot be safe in a Monarchy, is not worth the Answering; As if Princes were not Governed by the same Rules of Policy, as States are, To do all things for the Well-fair of the Subjects, wherein their own Interest is concerned.

It is True, in a Government wholly Dispotical, whose Support is altogether in it's Military Forces; where Trade hath no Concern in the Affaires of the State; Brings no Revenue, There might be a Jealousy, That such a Bank might tempt a Prince to Seize it; when by doing it, he doth not Prejudice the Affairs of his Government: But in *England*, where the Government is not Dispotical; But the People Free; and have as great a Share in the Sovereign Legislative Power, as the Subjects of any States have, or ever had; where the Customs makes great Figures, in the Kings Exchequer; where Ships are the Bullworks of the Kingdom; and where the Flourish of Trade is as much the Interest of the King as of the People, There can be no such Cause of Fear: For, What Objections can any Man make, that his Mony in the Bank, may not be as well secured by a Law, as his Property is? Or; Why he should be more afraid of Losing his Mony, than his Land or Goods?

Interest is the Rent of Stock, and is the same as the Rent of Land: The First, is the Rent of the Wrought or Artificial Stock; the Latter, of the Unwrought, or Natural Stock.

Interest is commonly reckoned for Mony; because the Mony Borrowed at Interest, is to be repayed in Mony; but this is a mistake; For the Interest is paid for Stock: for the Mony borrowed, is laid out to buy Goods, or pay for them before bought: No Man takes up Mony at Interest, to lay it by him, and lose the Interest of it.

One use of Interest: It is the Rule by which the Trader makes up the Account of Profit and Loss; The Merchant expects by Dealing, to get more then Interest by his Goods; because of bad Debts, and other Hazards which he runs; and therefore, reckons all he gets above Interest, is Gain; all under, Loss; but if no more than Interest, neither Profit, nor Loss.

Another use of Interest, is, It is the measure of the Value of the Rent of Land; it sets the Price in Buying and Selling of Land: For, by adding

three Years Interest more than is in the Principle, Makes the usual Value of the Land of the Country; The difference of three Year is allowed; Because Land is more certain than Mony or Stock. Thus in *Holland*, where Mony is at three *per Cent.* by reckoning how many times three is in a Hundred Pounds, which is Thirty Three; and Adding three Years more; makes Thirty Six Years Purchase; the Value of the Land in *Holland*: And by the same Rule, interest being at six *per Cent.* in *England*, Land is worth but Twenty Years Purchase; and in *Ireland*, but Thirteen; Interest being there at Ten *per Cent.*: so that, according to the Rate of Interest, is that Value of the Land in the Country.

Therefore, Interest in all Countrys is settled by a Law, to make it certain; or else it could not be a Rule for the Merchant to make up his Account, nor the Gentleman, to Sell his Land By.

### Of the Use and Benefit of *Trade*.

The Use of *Trade* is to make, and provide things Necessary: Or useful for the Support, Defence, Ease, Pleasure, and Pomp of Life: Thus the Brewers, Bakers, Butchers, Poulterers, and Cooks, with the Apothecaries, Surgeons, and their Dependencies provide Food, and Medicine for the support of Life: The Cutlers, Gun-smiths, Powder-makers, with their Company of *Traders*, make things for Defence; The Shoo-makers, Sadlers, Couch, and Chair-makers, with abundance more for the Ease of Life: The Perfumers, Fidlers, Painters, and Booksellers, and all those Trades that make things to gratifie the Sense, or delight the Mind, promote Pleasure: But those Trades that are imploy'd to express the Pomp of Life, are Infinite; for, besides those that adorn Mans Body, as the Glover, Hosier, Hatter, Semstriss, Taylor, and many more, with those that make the Materials to Deck it; as Clothier, Silk-Weaver, Lace-Maker, Ribbon-Weaver, with their Assistance of Drapers, Mercers, and Milliners, and a Thousand more: Those Trades that make the Equipage for Servants, Trappings for Horses; and those that Build, Furnish, and Adorn Houses, are innumerable.

Thus Busie Man is imployed, and it is for his own Benefit; For by *Trade*, the Natural Stock of the Country is improved, the Wool and Flax,

are made into Cloth; the Skins, into Leather; and the Wood, Lead, Iron and Tin, wrought into Thousand useful Things: The *Over-plus* of these Wares not useful, are transported by the Merchants, and Exchanged for the Wines, Oyls, Spices, and every Thing that is good of Forreign Countries: The Trader hath One Share for his Pains, and the Land-Lord the Other for his Rent: So, that by *Trade*, the Inhabitants in general, are not only well Fed, Clothed and Lodged; but the Richer sort are Furnished with all things to promote the Ease, Pleasure, & Pomp of Life: Whereas, in the same Country, where there's no Trade, the Land-Lords would have but Coarse Diet, Coarser Clothes, and worse Lodgings; and nothing for the Rent of their Lands, but the Homage and Attendance of their Poor Bare-footed Tenants, for they have nothing else to give.

*Trade* Raiseth the Rent of the Land, for by the Use of several sorts of Improvements, the Land Yieldeth a greater Natural Stock; by which, the Land-lord's Share is the greater: And it is the same thing, whether his Share be paid in Mony, or Goods; for the Mony must be laid out to Buy such Good's: Mony is an Imaginary Value made by a Law, for the Conveniency of Exchange: It is the Natural Stock that is the Real Value, and Rent of the Land.

Another Benefit of *Trade*, is, That, it doth not only bring Plenty, but hath occasioned Peace: For the Northern Nations, as they increased, were forced from the Necessities of their Climates, to Remove; and used to Destroy, and Conquer the Inhabitants of the Warmer Climates to make Room for themselves; thence was a Proverb, *Omne Malum ab Aquilone*.<sup>9</sup> But those Northern People being settled in *Trade*, the Land by their Industry, is made more Fertile; and by the Exchange of the Nations Stock, for Wines and Spices, of Hotter Climates, those Countries become most Habitable; and the Inhabitants having Warmer Food, Clothes, and Lodgings, are better able to endure the Extremitys of their Cold Seasons: This seems to be the Reason, That for these Seven or Eight Hundred Years last past, there has been no such Invasions from the Northern part of the World, as used to destroy the Inhabitants of the Warmer Countries: Besides, *Trade* Allows a better Price for Labourers,

9. [Everything bad comes from the North.]

than is paid for Fighting: So it is become more the Interest of Mankind to live at home in Peace, than to seek their fortunes abroad by Wars.

These are the Benefits of *Trade*, as they Relate to Mankind; those that Relate to Government, are many.

*Trade* Increaseth the Revenue of the Government, by providing an Employ for the People: For every Man that Works, pay by those things which he Eats and Wears, something to the Government. Thus the Excise and Custom's are Raised, and the more every Man Earns, the more he Consumes, and the King's Revenue is the more Increased.

This shews the way of Determining those Controversies, about which sort of Goods are most beneficial to the Government, by their Making, or Importing: The sole difference is from the Number of hands employ'd in making them; Hence the Importation of Raw Silk, is more Profitable to the Government than Gold, or Silver; Because there are more Hands employ'd in the Throwing, and Weaving of the First; than there can be in working the Latter.

Another Benefit of *Trade* is, It is Useful for the Defence of the Government; It Provides the Magazines of Warr. The Guns, Powder, and Bullets, are all made of Minerals, and are wrought by *Traders*; Besides, those Minerals are not to be had in all Countries; The great Stock of Saltpeter is brought from the *East Indies*, and therefore must be Imported by the Merchant, for the Exchange of the Natives Stock.

The last Benefit is, That *Trade* may be Assistant to the Inlarging of Empire; and if an Universal Empire, or Dominion of very Large Extent, can again be raised in the World, It seems more probable to be done by the Help of *Trade*; By the Increase of Ships at Sea, than by Arms at Land: This is too large a Subject to be here Treated of; but the *French* King's seeming Attempt to Raise Empire in Europe, being that Common Theam of Mens Discourse, has caused some short Reflections, which will appear by Comparing the Difficulty of the one, with the Probability of the other.

The Difficulties of Raising a Dominion of very Large Extent; especially in *Europe*, are Many.

First, *Europe* is grown more Populous than formerly, and there are more Fortified Towns and Cities, than were in the time of the *Roman* Empire, which was the last extended Dominion; and therefore, not easily Subjected to the Power of any one Prince.

Whether *Europe* be grown more Populous, Solely by the Natural Increase of Mankind; There being more Born than Dye, which first Peopled the World?

Or, Whether, since the Inhabitants of *Europe* being Addicted<sup>o</sup> to *Trade*, the ground is made more Fertile, and yields greater Plenty of Food; which hath prevented famine, that formerly destroy'd great Numbers of Mankind: So that no great Famines, has been taken Notice of by Historians, in these Last Three Hundred Years?

Whether by Dreining Great Bogs, Lakes, and Fens, and Cutting down vast Woods, to make Room for the Increase of Mankind, the Air is Grown more Healthy; So that Plagues, and other Epidemical Diseases, are not so destructive as formerly? none so violent, as *Procopius*<sup>10</sup> and *Wallsingham*<sup>11</sup> Report, which destroyed such Vast Numbers in *Italy*, that there were not left Ten in a Thousand; and in other Parts of *Europe*, not enough alive to Bury the Dead. Whereas, the Plague in (1665) the Greatest since, did not take away the Hundredth Person in *England*, *Holland*, and other Countries, where it Raged?

Whether, since the Invention of Guns and Gun-Powder, so many Men are not slain in the Wars as formerly? *Xerxes* lost 260000 in one Battle against the *Grecians*; *Alexander*, destroyed 110000 of *Darius's* Army; *Marius*, slew 120000 of the *Cimbri*; and in great Battles, seldome less than 100000 fell: But now 20000 Men are accounted very great Slaughter.

Whether, since the *Northern* People have fallen on *Trade*, such vast Numbers, are not destroyed by Invasions?

Whether, by all those Ways, or by which of them most, *Europe* is grown Populous, is not Material to this Discourse: It is sufficient to shew, That the Matter of Fact is so, which does appear by comparing the Antient Histories of Countries with the Modern?

10. "Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae. Editio emendatio et copiosior, consilio B. G. Niebuhrii C. F. instituta auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae Continuata, Pars II: Procopius" (Bonnae, 1883); see I, 249–255 (De Bello Persico) and II, 162 (De Bello Gotthico).

11. "Ypodigma Neustriae" (ed. by Henry Thomas Riley in Gt. Brit. Rolls Chron., London, 1876); cf. p. 292 (A. D. 1349). The work was first published in 1574, and again appeared, as part of the "Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a Veteribus scripta," of William Camden, published at Frankfort in 1603.

In the Antient Descriptions, the Countries are full of Vast Woods, wild Beasts; the Inhabitants barbarous, and as wild, without Arts, and the Governments are like Colonies, or Herds of People: But in the Modern, the Woods are cut down, and the Lyons, Bears, and wild Beasts destroyed; no Flesh-Eaters are left to inhabit with Man, but those Dogs and Cats that he tames for his Use: Corn grows where the Woods did, and with the Timber are built Cities, Towns and Villages; the People are Cloathed, and have all Arts among them; and those little Colonies and Families, are increased into Great States and Kingdoms; and the most undeniable Proof of the Increase of Mankind in *England*, is the Doom-Day-Book, which was a Survey taken of all the Inhabitants of *England*, in the Reign of *William* the Conquerour; by which it appears, that the People of *England* are increased more than double since that time: But since the *Mosaical Hypothesis* of the Increase of the World, is generally believed amongst the Christians. And the late Lord Chief Justice *Hales*, in his Book of the Origination of Mankind,<sup>12</sup> hath endeavoured to satisfie all the rest of the World. It would be misspending of Time, to use any other Topick for the further Proof thereof, than what naturally follows in this Discourse, which is from the Different Success of Arms, in the Latter and Former Ages.

In the Infancy of the World, Governments began with little Families and Colonies of Men; so that, when ever any Government arrived to greater Heighth than the rest, either by the great Wisdom or Courage of the Governor, they afterwards grew a pace: It was no Difficulty for *Ninus*, that was the oldest Government, and consequently, the most Populous, to begin the *Assyrian* Empire; nor for his Successors to continue and enlarge it: Such Vast Armies of *Cyrus*, *Darius*, *Hystospis* and *Xerxes*, the least of their Forces amounting to above 500000, could not be Resisted, when the World was but thin Peopled.

These great Armies might at first sight, seem to infer, That the World was more Populous than now; because the Armies of the greatest Princes, seldom now exceed the Number of Fifty, or Sixty Thousand Men; But the Reason of those great Numbers, was, They were not so

12. Sir Matthew Hale (1609–76) “The Primitive Origination of Mankind, considered and examined according to the Light of Nature.” [London: W. Godbid, 1677.]

well Skilled in Military Arts, and shew that the World was in the Infancy of its Knowledge, rather than Populous; for all that were able to bear Arms, went to the Wars: And if that were now the Custom, there might be an Army in *England* of above Three Million, allowing the Inhabitants to be Seven Millions; and by the same Proportion, the King of *France's* Country, (being four Times bigger) might raise Twelve Millions; such a Number was never heard of in this World.

The next Difficulty against the enlarging of Empire by Arms, is, That since Printing, and the Use of the Needle hath been discovered, Navigation is better known, and thence is a Greater Commerce amongst Men, the Countries and Languages are more understood, Knowledge more dispersed, and the Arts of War in all Places known; so that, Men fight more upon equal Terms than formerly; and like two Skilful Fencers, fight a long Time, before either gets Advantage.

The *Assyrians* & *Persians* Conquered more by the Number of Souldiers, than Discipline; the *Grecians* and *Romans*, more by Discipline than Number; as the World grew older, it grew wiser: Learning first flourished among the *Grecians*, afterwards among the *Romans*; and as the Latter succeeded in Learning, so they did in Empire. But now both Parties are Equally Disciplin'd and Arm'd; and the Successes of War are not so great; Victory is seldom gained without some Considerable Loss to the Conquerour.

Another Difficulty to the enlarging of Dominion by Arms, is, That the *Goths* Overcoming the greatest Part of *Europe*, did by their Form of Government, so settle Liberty, and Property of Land, that it is difficult for any Prince to Change that Form.

Whether the *Goths* were Part of the Ten Tribes, as some are of Opinion, and to Countenance their Conjectures, have Compared the Languages of the Inhabitants, *Wales*, *Finland* and *Orchadis*, and other *North-ern* Parts (little frequented by Strangers, which might alter their Language) and find them to agree with the *Hebrew* in many Words and Sound, all their Speech being Guttural. This is certain, their Form of Government seems framed after the Examples of *Moses's* Government in the Land of *Canaan*, by dividing the Legislative Power, according to the Property of Land, according to that Antient Maxim, That Dominion is founded upon Property of Land. There Monarchy seems to be

made by an easie Division of Land into Thirds, by a Conquering Army, setting down in Peace; the General being King, has one Third; the Colonels being the Lords, another Third; and the Captains, and other Inferiour Officers being Gentlemen, another; the Common Souldiers are the Farmers, and the Conquered are the Villains: The Legislative Power is divided amongst them, according to their Share in the Land; it being necessary that those that have Property of Land, should have Power to make Laws to Preserve it.

There seems to be but two settled Forms of Government; The *Turkish*, and *Gothick*, or *English* Monarchy: They are both founded upon Property of Land; in the First, the Property and Legislative Power is solely in the Prince; In the Latter, they are in both the Prince and People: The one is best fitted to raise Dominion by Armies; for the Prince must be Absolute to give Command, according to the Various Fortunes of Warr: The other is Best for *Trade*; for men are most industrious, where they are most free, and secure to injoy the Effects of their Labours.

All other Sorts of Government, either *Aristocracy*, or *Democracy*, where the Supream Magistrate is Elective, are Imperfect, Tumultuous, and Unsettled: For Man is Naturally Ambitious; he inherits the same Ruling Spirit that God gave to *Adam*, to Govern the Creation with: And the oftner that the Throne is Empty, the oftner will Contentions and Struggles Happen to get into it: Where *deter digniori* is the Rule, Warr always Ensues for the Golden Prize. Such Governments will never be without such Men as *Marius* and *Scilla*, to disturb them; nor without such a Man as *Caesar* to Usurp them; notwithstanding all the Contrivance for their Defence by those Polititians who seems fond of such Formes of Government.

The *Gothick* Government being a well fixed Form, and the People so free under it, is great hindrance to the Enlarging of Dominion; for a People under a good Government do more Vigorously Defend it: A free People have more to lose than Slaves, and their Success is better Rewarded than by any Mercenary Pay, and therefore, make a better Resistance: It was the Freedom of the *Grecians* and *Romans* that raised their Courage, and had an equal Share in raising their Empires, with their Millitary Discipline: The free City of *Tyre* put *Alexander* to more Trouble to Conquer, than all the Citys of *Asia*.



The People of *Asia*, living under a Dispotick Power, made little Resistance; *Alexander* subdued *Libia*, *Phoenicia*, *Pamphilia*, without much Opposition in his Journey to meet *Darius*; *Egypt* came under Subjection without Fighting, and so did many Countries, being willing to Change the *Persian* Yoak: Besides, he Fought but two Battles for the whole *Persian Empire*; and the Resistance of those slavish People was so weak, that he did not lose 500 *Grecians* in either of the Battles, tho' *Darius* Number far exceeded his; the one being above 260000, and the other not Forty; And there was as great Disproportion in the Slaughter; for at the Battle in *Cilicia* he slew 110000, and that at *Arbela* 40000; whereas, the *Spartan*, a Free People, about the same time, fought with *Antipater* his Vice-Roy of *Macedon*; and in a Fight, where neither Army exceeded 60000, slew 1012 of the *Macedonians*, which was more than *Alexander* lost in both his Battles: So great is the Difference of fighting against a Free, and a Slavish Effeminate People.

For the same Reasons, That the World is grown more Populous, That the Arts of War are more known. That the People of *Europe* live under a Free Government. It is as difficult to keep a Country in Subjection, as to Conquer it. The People are too Numerous to be kept in Obedience: To destroy the greatest Part, were too Bloody, and Inhuman; To Burn the Towns, and Villages, and so force the People to remove, Is to lose the greatest share in Conquest; for the People are the Riches and the Strength of the Country, And it is not much more Advantage to a Prince, to have a Title to Lands, in *Terra Incognita*, As to Countries without People.

Besides, Countries and Languages being more known; And Mankind more acquainted than formerly: The Oppressed People remove into the next Country they can find Shelter in, & become the Subjects of other Governments. By such Addition of Subjects, those Governments growing stronger, are better able to Resist the Incroachs of Empire: So that, every Conquest makes the next more difficult, from the Assistance of those People before Conquered; To Transplant the Conquered into a Remote Country, as formerly, Is not to be Practised; There is now no Room, the World is so full of People.

To Conquer, and leave them Free, only paying Tribute and Homage, Is the same as not to Conquer them: For there is no Reason to expect their Submission longer, than till they are able to Resist; which will

not be long before they make the same Opposition, if they continue in the same Possession; and therefore, though the *Romans* in the Infancy of their Government, did leave several Countries Free, as an Assistance to other Conquest; yet, when they grew stronger, they turned all their Conquest into Provinces, being the surest way to keep them from Revolting.

These are the Difficulties of enlarging Dominion at Land, but are not Impediments to its Rise at Sea: For those Things that Obstruct the Growth of Empire at Land, do rather Promote its Growth at Sea. That the World is more Populous, is no Prejudice, there is Room enough upon the Sea; the many Fortified Towns may hinder the March of an Army, but not the Sailing of Ships: The Arts of Navigation being discover'd, hath added an Unlimited Compass to the Naval Power. There needs no Change of the *Gothick* Government; for that best Agrees with such an Empire.

The Ways of preserving Conquests gain'd by Sea, are different from those at Land. By the one, the Cities, Towns and Villages are burnt, to thin the People, that they may be the easier Governed, and kept into Subjection; by the other, the Cities must be enlarged, and New ones built: Instead of Banishing the People, they must be continued, in their Possession, or invited to the Seat of Empire; by the one, the Inhabitants are enslaved, by the other, they are made Free: The Seat of such an Empire, must be in an Island, that their Defence may be solely in Shipping; the same way to defend their Dominion, as to enlarge it.

To Conclude, there needs no other Argument, That Empire may be raised sooner at Sea, than at Land; than by observing the Growth of the *United Provinces*, within One Hundred Years last past, who have Changed their Style, from *Poor Distressed*, into that of *High and Mighty States of the United Provinces*: And *Amsterdam*, that was not long since, a poor Fisher-Town, is now one of the Chief Cities in *Europe*; and within the same Compass of Time, that the *Spaniard & French* have been endeavouring to Raise an Universal Empire upon the Land; they have risen to that Height, as to be an equal Match for either of them at Sea; and were their Government fitted for a Dominion of large Extent, and their Country separated from their Troublesome Neighbour the Continent, which would Free them from that Military Charge in defending them-

selves, they might, in a short Time, Contend for the Sovereignty of the Seats.

But *England* seems the Properer Seat for such an Empire: It is an Island, therefore requires no Military Force to defend it. Besides, Merchants and Souldiers never thrive in the same Place; It hath many large Harbours fitting for a large Dominion: The Inhabitants are naturally Couragious, as appears from the Effects of the Climate, in the Game Cocks, and Mastiff Dogs, being no where else so stout: The Monarchy is both fitted for Trade and Empire. And were there an Act for a General Naturalization, that all Forreigners, purchasing Land in *England*, might Enjoy the Freedom of *Englishmen*, It might within much less Compass of Time, than any Government by Arms at Land, arrive to such a Dominion: For since, in some Parts of *Europe*, Mankind is harassed and disturbed with Wars; Since, some Governours have in-croached upon the Rights of their Subjects, and inslaved them; Since the People of *England* enjoy the Largest Freedoms, and Best Government in the World; and since by Navigation and Letters, there is a great Commerce, and a General Acquaintance among Mankind, by which the Laws and the Liberties of all Nations, are known; those that are oppressed and inslaved, may probably Remove, and become the Subjects of *England*: And if the Subjects increase, the Ships, Excise and Customs, which are the Strength and Revenue of the Kingdom, will in Proportion increase, which may be so Great in a short Time, not only to preserve its Antient Sovereignty over the Narrow Seas, but to extend its Dominion over all the Great Ocean: An Empire, not less Glorious, & of a much larger Extent, than either *Alexander's* or *Cesar's*.

### Of the Chief Causes that Promote TRADE.

The Chief Causes that Promote *Trade*, (not to mention Good Government, Peace, and Scituation,<sup>13</sup> with other Advantages) are Industry in the Poor, and Liberality in the Rich: Liberality, is the free Usage of all those things that are made by the Industry of the Poor, for the Use of the

13. [Local respect.]

Body and Mind; It Relates chiefly to Man's self, but doth not hinder him from being Liberal to others.

The Two Extrems to this Vertue, are Prodigality and Covetousness: Prodigality is a Vice that is prejudicial to the Man, but not to *Trade*; It is living a pace, and spending that in a Year, that should last all his Life: Covetousness is a Vice, prejudicial both to Man & *Trade*; It starves the Man, and breaks the Trader; and by the same way the Covetous Man thinks he grows rich, he grows poor; for by not consuming the Goods that are provided for Man's Use, there ariseth a dead Stock, called Plenty, and the Value of those Goods fall, and the Covetous Man's Estates, whether in Land, or Mony, become less worth: And a Conspiracy of the Rich Men to be Covetous, and not spend, would be as dangerous to a Trading State, as a Foreign War; for though they themselves get nothing by their Covetousness, nor grow the Richer, yet they would make the Nation poor, and the Government great Losers in the Customs and Excises that ariseth from Expenditure.

Liberality ought Chiefly to be Exercised in an equal Division of the Expenditure amongst those things that relate to Food, Cloaths, and Lodging; according to the Portion, or Station, that is allotted to every Man, with some allowance for the more refined Pleasures of the Mind; with such Distributions, as may please both sect of Philosophers, *Platonist* and *Epicureans*: The Belly must not be starved to cloath the Back-Part.

Those Expenses that most Promote *Trade*, are in Cloaths and Lodging: In Adorning the Body and the House, There are a Thousand Traders Employ'd in Cloathing and Decking the Body, and Building, and Furnishing of Houses, for one that is Employ'd in providing Food. Belonging to Cloaths, is Fashion; which is the Shape or Form of Apparel.

In some places, it is fixt and certain; as all over *Asia*, and in *Spain*; but in *France*, *England*, and other places, the Dress alters; Fashion or the alteration of Dress, is a great Promoter of *Trade*, because it occasions the Expenditure of Cloaths, before the Old ones are worn out: It is the Spirit and Life of *Trade*; It makes a Circulation, and gives a Value by Turns, to all sorts of Commodities; keeps the great Body of *Trade* in Motion; it is an Invention to Dress a Man, as if he Lived in a perpetual Spring; he never sees the Autum of his Cloaths: The following of the Fashion, Is a Respect paid to the Prince and his Court, by approving his Choice in the shape of the Dress. It lyes under an ill Name amongst many Grave and

Sober People, but without any Just Cause; for those that Exclaim against the Vanity of the New Fashion, and at the same time, commend the Decency of the Old one, forget that every Old Fashion was once New, and then the same Argument might have been used against it. And if an *Indian*, or Stranger, that never saw any person Cloathed before, were to be Judge of the Controversy, and were to Determin upon seeing at the same time a well Drest-Courtier in the New Fashion, and another in the Old, which is accounted Decent; and a third in the Robes of an Officer, which by common Esteem, had a Reverence: It will be Two to One, against any One of the Grave Fashions; for it's only Use and Custom by which Habits become Grave and Decent, and not any particular Conveniency in the shape; for if Conveniency were the Rule of Commendation, there would arise a Question not Easily to be Determined, Whether the *Spanish* Garb made strait to the Body, or the loose Habit of the *Turks*, were to be Chosen? And therefore since all Habits are equally handsome, and hard to know which is most Convenient: The Promoting of New Fashions, ought to be Encouraged, because it provides a Livelihood for a great Part of Mankind.

The next Expence that chiefly promotes *Trade*, is Building, which is natural to Mankind, being the making of a Nest or Place for his Birth, it is the most proper and vible Distinction of Riches, and Greatness; because the Expences are too Great for Mean Persons to follow. It is a Pleasure fit to entertain Princes; for a Magnificent Structure doth best represent the Majesty of the Person that lives in it, and is the most lasting and truest History of the Greatness of his Person.

Building is the chiefest Promoter of *Trade*; it Implies a greater Number of Trades and People, than Feeding or Cloathing: The Artificers that belong to Building, such as *Bricklayers*, *Carpenters*, *Plaisterers*, &c. employ many Hands; Those that make the Materials for Building, such as *Bricks*, *Lyme*, *Tyle*, &c. employ more; and with those that Furnish the Houses, such as *Upholsterers*, *Pewterers*, &c. they are almost Innumerable.

In *Holland*, where *Trade* hath made the Inhabitants very Rich, It is the Care of the Government, to Incourage the Builder, and at the Charge of the *State*, the Grafts<sup>14</sup> and Streets are made. And at *Amsterdam*, they have three Times, at great Expence, Thrown down the Walls of their

14. [Ditches, moats.]

City, and Drained the Boggs, to make Room for the Builder: For Houses are the Places where the Artificers make their Goods, and Merchants Sell them; and without New Houses, the Trades and Inhabitants could not Increase.

Beside, There is another great Advantage to *Trade*, by Enlarging of Cities; the Two Beneficial Expences of Cloathing and Lodging, are Increased; Man being Naturally Ambitious, the Living together, occasion Emulation, which is seen by Out-Vying one another in Apparel, Equipage, and Furniture of the House; whereas, if a Man lived Solitary alone, his chiefest Expence, would be Food. It is from this very Custom; If the Gentry of *France* Living in Cities, with the Invention of Fashion; That *France*, tho' a Country no way fitted for *Trade*, has so great a share of it: It is from Fashion in Cloaths, and Living in Cities, That the King of *France's* Revenues is so great, by which he is become troublesome to his Neighbours, and will always be so, while he can preserve Peace within his own Country; by which, those Fountains of Riches, may run Interrupted into his *Exchequer*.

## Of the Chief Causes of the Decay of TRADE in *England*, and Fall of the RENTS of LAND.

The Two Chief Causes of the Decay of *Trade*, are the many Prohibitions and high Interest.

The Prohibition of *Trade*, is the Cause of its Decay; for all Forreign Wares are brought in by the Exchange of the Native: So that the Prohibiting of any Foreign Commodity, doth hinder the Making and Exportation of so much of the Native, as used to be Made and Exchanged for it. The Artificers and Merchants, that Dealt in such Goods, lose their Trades; and the Profit that was gained by such Trades, and laid out amongst other Traders, is Lost. The Native Stock for want of such Exportation, Falls in Value, and the Rent of the Land must Fall with the Value of the Stock.

The common Argument for the Prohibiting Foreign Commodities, is, That the Bringing in, and Consuming such Foreign Wares, hinders

the Making and Consuming the like sort of Goods of our own Native Make and Growth; therefore *Flanders-Lace*, *French-Hats*, *Gloves*, *Silks*, *Westphalia-Bacon*, &c. are Prohibited, because it is supposed, they hinder the Consumption of *English-Lace*, *Gloves*, *Hats*, *Silk*, *Bacon*, &c. But this is a mistaken Reason, and ariseth by not considering what it is that Occasions Trade. It is not Necessity that causeth the Consumption, Nature may be Satisfied with little; but it is the wants of the Mind, Fashion, and desire of Novelties, and Things scarce, that causeth Trade. A Person may have *English-Lace*, *Gloves*, or *Silk*, as much as he wants, and will Buy no more such; and yet, lay out his Mony on a Point of *Venice*, *Jessimine-Gloves*, or *French-Silks*; he may desire to Eat *Westphalia-Bacon*, when he will not *English*; so that, the Prohibition of Forreign Wares, does not necessarily cause a greater Consumption of the like sort of *English*.

Besides, There is the same wants of the Mind in Foreigners, as in the *English*; they desire Novelties; they Value *English-Cloth*, *Hats*, and *Gloves*, and Foreign Goods, more than their Native make; so that, tho' the Wearing or Consuming of Forreign Things, might lessen the Consuming of the same sort in *England*; yet there may not be a lesser Quantity made; and if the same Quantity be made, it will be a greater Advantage to the Nation, if they are Consumed in Foreign Countries, than at Home; because the Charge, and Imploy of the Freight, is Gained by it, which in bulky Goods, may be a Fourth Part of the whole Value.

The particular Trades that expect an Advantage by such Prohibition, are often mistaken; For if the Use of most Commodities depending upon Fashion, which often alters; The Use of those Goods cease. As to Instance, Suppose a Law to Prohibit Cane-Chairs; It would not necessarily follow, That those that make *Turkey-Work* Chairs, would have a better Trade. For the Fashion may Introduce, *Wooden*, *Leather*, or *Silk* Chairs, (which are already in Use amongst the Gentry, The Cane-Chairs being grown too Cheap and Common) or else, they may lay aside the Use of all Chairs, Introducing the Custom of Lying upon Carpets; the Ancient *Roman* Fashion; still in Use amongst the *Turks*, *Persians*, and all the *Eastern* Princes.

Lastly, If the Suppressing or Prohibiting of some sorts of Goods, should prove an Advantage to the Trader, and Increase the Consumption

of the same sort of our Native Commodity: Yet it may prove a Loss to the Nation. For the Advantage to the Nation from *Trade*, is, from the Customs, and from those Goods that Implies most Hands. So that, tho' the Prohibition may Increase, as the Consumption of the like sort of the Native; yet if it should Obstruct the Transporting of other Goods which were Exchanged for them, that Paid more Custom, Freight, or Employed more Hands in making; The Nation will be a loser by the Prohibition: As to Instance, If Tobacco or Woollen-Cloth were used to Exchange for *Westphaly*-Bacon, The Nation loseth by the Prohibition, tho' it should Increase the Consumption of *English*-Bacon; because the First, Pays more Freight, and Custom; and the Latter, Implies more Hands. By this Rule it appears, That the Prohibiting of all unwrought Goods, such as raw Silk, Cotton, Flax, &c. and all Bulky Goods; such as Wines, Oyls, Fruits, &c. would be a Loss to the Nation; because nothing can be sent in Exchange that Implies fewer Hands than the First, or Pays greater Freight than the Latter.

It doth not alter the Case, If the Ballance of the Account, or all the Foreign Goods, were bought by Silver or Gold; For Silver and Gold, are Foreign Commodities; Pay but little Freight, and Employ but few Hands in the Working; And are at First brought into *England*, by the Exchange of some Native Goods, and having Paid for their coming hither, must Pay for the Carriage out. It is true, That if our Serge, Stuffs, or Cloth, are Exchanged for Unmanufactured Goods, it would be a greater Advantage to the Nation, because of the difference in Number of Hands in the making of the First, and the Later.

But all Trading Countries Study their Advantage of *Trade*, and Know the difference of the Profit by the Exchange of wrought Goods, for unwrought: And therefore, for any Nation to make a Law to Prohibit all Foreign Goods, but such only as are most Advantageous; Is to put other Nations upon making the same Laws; and the Consequence will be to Ruine all Foreign *Trade*. For the Foundation of all Foreign *Trade*, is, from the Exchange of the Native Commodities of each Country, for one another.

To Conclude, If the bringing in of Foreign Goods, should hinder the making and consuming of the Native, which will very seldom happen; this disadvantage is not to be Remedied by a Prohibition of those Goods;



but by Laying so great Duties upon them, that they may be always Dearer than those of our Country make: The Dearness will hinder the common Consumption of them, and preserve them for the Use of the Gentry, who may Esteem them, because they are Dear; and perhaps, might not Consume more of the *English* Growth, were the other not Imported. By such Duties, the Revenue of the Crown, will be Increased; And no Exceptions can be taken by any Foreign Prince, or Government; Since it is in the Liberty of every Government, To Lay what Duty or Imposition they please. *Trade* will continue Open, and Free; and the *Traders*, Enjoy the Profit of their *Trade*: The Dead Stock of the Nation, that is more than can be Used, will be Carried off, which will keep up the *Price* of the Native Stock, and the *Rent* of the *Land*.

The next Cause of the Decay of Trade in *England*, and the Fall of *Rents*, is, That Interest is higher in *England*, than in *Holland*, and other places of great *Trade*: It is at Six *per Cent.* in *England*, and at Three in *Holland*; For all Merchants that *Trade* in the same sort of Goods, to the same Ports, should *Trade* by the same Interest.

Interest is the Rule of Buying and Selling: And being higher in *England*, than in *Holland*; The *English* Merchant Trades with a Disadvantage, because he cannot Sell the same sort of Goods in the same Port, for the same Value as the *Dutch* Merchant. The *Dutch* Merchant can Sell 100 *l.* worth of Goods, for 103 *l.* And the *English* Merchant must Sell the same sort, for 106 *l.* to make the same Account of Principal and Interest.

When Sir *Thomas Gresham* had almost the sole *Trade* of *Spain*, and the *Turky-Company* the sole Selling of Cloth into *Turky*, and several other places; The Difference of Interest was then, no prejudice to *Trade*, tho' Interest was then in *England*, at Eight *per Cent.* Because, whoe'r has the sole *Trade* to a place, may set what Price he pleaseth upon his Goods: But now, *Trade* is dispersed, the same sort of Manufacture, is made in several Countries. The *Dutch* and *English* Merchants, *Trade* in the same sort of Goods, to the same Forreign Parts, and therefore they ought to Deal by the same Interest, which is the Measure of *Trade*.

Besides, And the *English* Merchant hath the same Disadvantage in the Return of the Goods he Buys; for the *Dutch* Merchant making his Return in the same sort of Goods, can under-Sell him.

By this Difference of Interest, *Holland* is become to be the great

Magazine, and Store-House of this Part of *Europe*, for all sorts of Goods: For they may be laid up Cheaper in *Holland*, than in *England*.

It is impossible for the Merchant when he has Bought his Goods, To know what he shall Sell them for: The Value of them, depends upon the Difference betwixt the Occasion and the Quantity; tho' that be the Chiefest of the Merchants Care to observe, yet it Depends upon so many Circumstances, that it's impossible to know it. Therefore if the plenty of the Goods, has brought down the Price; the Merchant layeth them up, till the Quantity is consumed, and the Price riseth. But the *English* Merchant, cannot lay up his, but with Disadvantage; for by that time, the Price is risen so as to pay Charges and Interest at Six *per Cent.* the same Goods are sent for from *Holland*, and bring down the Price: For they are laid up there, at Three *per Cent.* and can therefore be Sold Cheaper.

For want of Considering this, in *England*, many an *English* Merchant has been undone; for, though by observing the Bill of Lading, he was able to make some Guess of the Stock that was Imported here; and therefore, hath kept his Goods by him for a Rise: But not knowing what Stock there was in *Holland*, hath not been able to sell his Goods to Profit, the same Goods being brought from thence before the Price riseth high enough to pay Ware-House-Room, and Interest.

So that, now the great part of the *English* Trade is driven by a quick Return, every Day Buying and Selling, according to a Bill of Rate every day Printed. By this Means, the *English* Trade is narrowed and confined, and the King loseth the Revenue of Importation, which he would have, if *England* were the Magazine of *Europe*; and the Nation loseth the Profit, which would arise from the Hands imploy'd in Freight and Shipping.

Interest being so high in *England*, is the Cause of the Fall of Rents; for *Trade* being confined to a Quick Return: And the Merchant being not able to lay up Foreign Goods, at the same Interest as in *Holland*, he Exports less of the Native; and the Plenty of the Native Stock Brings down the Rent of Land; for the rest of the Land that produceth the Stock, must fall, as the Price of the Stock doth.

Whereas, if Interest were at the same Rates as in *Holland*, at Three *per Cent.* it would make the Rent more certain, and raise the Value of the Land.

This Difference of Three *per Cent.* is so Considerable, that many

*Dutch Merchants Living in Holland, having Sold their Goods in England; give Order, to put out their Stock to Interest in England; thinking That a better Advantage than they can make by Trade.*

It will raise the *Rent* of some Estates, and preserve the *Rent* of others: For the Farmer must make up his Account, as the Merchant doth; the Interest of the Stock, must be reckoned, as well as the *Rent* of Land: Now if the Farmer hath 300 *l.* Stock, upon his Farm, that is so easily Rented, that he Lives well upon it; he may add 9 *l. per Annum* more to the *Rent*, when the Interest is at Three *per Cent.* and make the same Account of Profit from the Farm: As he doth now Interest, is at Six *per Cent.* And those Farmers that are hard Rented, having the same Stock, will have 9 *l. per Annum* Advance in the Account, towards the Easing the *Rent*: For altho' the Farmer gets nothing more at the Years end, yet in making up of Account, there must 9 *l.* add to the Value of Land, and taken from the Account of the Stock. If Interest were at Three *per Cent.* there would always be a Magazine of Corn and Wooll in *England*, which would be a great Advantage to the Farmer, and make his *Rent* more certain; for there are Years of Plenty, and Scarcity; and there are more Farmers undone by Years of great Plenty, than Recover themselves in Years of Scarcity; for when the Price is very low, the Crop doth not pay the Charge of Sowing, Farming, and Carrying to Market; and when it is Dear, It doth not fall to all Mens Fortune that were losers by Plenty, to have a Crop: Now if Interest were at Three *per Cent.* Corn and Wooll in Years of great Plenty, would be Bought and Laid up to be Sold in Years of Scarcity. The Buying in Years of Plenty, would keep the Price from Falling too Low; and the Selling in Years of Scarcity, would prevent it from Rising too High; by this means, a moderate Price, being best upon Corn and Wooll; the Farmers Stock and *Rent* of the Land, would be more certain.

But now *Holland* being the great Magazine of Corn, Man will Lay up any considerable Quantity in *England* at Six *per Cent.* when he may always Buy as much as he wants, that was Laid up at Three *per Cent.* and may bring it from thence, as Soon, and as Cheap, into any Parts of *England*, as if it were Laid up here.

*Thirdly*, If Interest were at Three *per Cent.* the Land of *England*, would be worth from Thirty Six, to Forty Years Purchase; for Interest, sets the Price in the Buying and Selling of Land.

The bringing down of Interest, will not alter the Value of other Wares; for the Value of all Wares, arriveth from their Use; and the Dearness and Cheapness of them, from their Plenty and Scarcity: Nor will it make Mony more Scarce. For if the Law allow no more Interest, than Three *per Cent.* they that Live upon it, must Lend at that rate, or have no Interest; for they cannot put it forth any where else to better Advantage. But if it be supposed, That it may make Mony scarce, and that it may be a Prejudice to the Government, who want the Advance of the Mony; It may be provided for, by a Clause, that all that Lend Mony to the King, shall have 6 *l. per Cent.*; such Advantage would make all Men Lend to the Government: And the King will save two *per Cent.* by such a Law.

The seeming Prejudice from such a Law, is, It will lessen the Revenue of those who live upon Interest: But this will not be a General Prejudice; for many of those Persons have Land as well as Mony, and will get as much by the Rise of one, as by the Fall of the other. Besides, many of them, are Persons that live Thriftily, and much within the Compass of their Estates; and therefore, will not want it, but in Opinion. They have had a long Time, the Advantage of the Borrower; for the Land yielding but 4 *l. per Cent.* and the Interest being at 6 *l. per Cent.* a new Debt is every Year contracted of 2 *l. per Cent.* more than the Value of the Debt in Land will pay, which hath Devoured many a good Farm; and eat up the Estates of many of the Ancient Gentry of *England*.

*Moses*, that Wise Law-Giver, who designed, that the Land, divided amongst the *Jews*, should continue in their Families; forbid the *Jews* to pay Interest, well knowing that the Merchants of *Tyre*, who were to be their near Neighbours, would, by Lending Mony at Interest, at last get their Lands: And that this seems to be the Reason, is plain; For the *Jews* might take Interest of Strangers, but not pay; for by taking Interest, they could not lose their Estates.

The Lawyers have invented Intails, to preserve Estates in Families; and the bringing down of Interest to Three *per Cent.* will much help to continue it; because the Estates being raised to double the Value, will require double the Time, after the same Proportion of Expence to Consume it in.

The raising the Value of Land, at this Time, seems most necessary, when the Nation is Engaged in such a Chargeable War: For the Land is

the Fund that must support and preserve the Government; and the Taxes will be lesser and easier payd; for they will not be so great: For 3 *sh.* in the *Pound*, is now 133½ Part of every Mans Estate in Land, reckoning at Twenty Years Purchase. But if the Value of the Land be doubled, it will be the 226 Part of the Land, which may be much easier born.

*Campinella*, who Wrote an 100 years since, upon considering of the great Tract of the Land of *France*; says, That if ever it were United under one Prince, it would produce so great a Revenue; It might give Law to all *Europe*.<sup>15</sup>

The Effect of this Calculation, Is since, seen by the Attempts of this present King of *France*: And therefore, since *England* is an Island, and the Number of Acres cannot be Increased; It seems absolutely necessary, That the Value of them, should be raised to Defend the Nation against such a Powerful Force: It will be some Recompence to the Gentry, whose Lands must bear the Burthen of the War, to have the Value of their Estates Raised; which is the Fund and Support of the Government; Is a great Advantage to the whole Nation; and it's the greater, because it doth not Disturb, Lessen, nor Alter the Value of any Thing else.

15. "Th. Campenella de Monarchia Hispania." Editio novissima, aucta et emendata ut praeatio ad lectorem indicat (Amsterodami, 1653); see chap. XXIV (De Gallia), p. 187.



## *Discourses upon Trade* 1691

DUDLEY NORTH was born the son of the fourth Baron North in 1641. It is said that he was stolen by a beggar-woman for his clothes as a child but was soon recovered. He showed no taste for book learning early in life and was apprenticed to an English merchant named Davis, who made him agent to the Turkish trade at Smyrna in 1661 and Constantinople in 1662. By all accounts, he was a vigorous and successful factor, giving life to what had been a rather sluggish trade there. He was made treasurer of the Turkey Company, and there was apparently some talk of his becoming ambassador of England to Constantinople. Having made a fortune, he returned to London in 1680, a respected man of the world, fluent in Turkish and some of the dialects of the Levant. In 1682, he was named sheriff of London, to the great dismay of the Whigs. Afterward, he became a commissioner for the customs and an agent in the treasury as well as a Tory member of Parliament from Banbury during the reign of James II. After the accession of William of Orange in 1689, he remained in London and was the subject of an inconclusive inquiry for his role in packing the juries that condemned Algernon Sidney and others in 1682. Thereafter, he was active mainly in commercial ventures until his death on the last day of 1691.

The work reprinted here is *Discourses upon Trade* (1691; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1907, ed. Jacob H. Hollander), and is one of the earliest attempts to theorize as a whole the workings of

a market economy in England. The unbracketed notes are by Hollander; the bracketed ones are by the present editor.

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## Discourses upon Trade

### THE PREFACE

These Papers came directed to me, in order, as I suppose, to be made Publick: And having transmitted them to the Press, which is the only means whereby the University of Mankind is to be inform'd, I am absolv'd of that Trust.

The Author is pleas'd to conceal himself; which after perusal of his Papers, I do not ascribe to any Diffidence of his Reasons, the Disgusts of Great Men, nor overmuch Modesty, which are the ordinary Inducements for lying hid; but rather to avoid the Fatigue of digesting, and polishing his Sentiments into such accurate Method, and clean Style, as the World commonly expects from Authors: I am confident he seeks only the Publick Good, and little regards Censure for the want of Neatness, and Dress, whereof he seems to make a slight account, and to rely wholly upon the Truth, and Justice of his Matter; yet he may reasonably decline the being noted, for either a careless, or an illiterate Person.

The Publick is an acute, as well as merciless Beast, which neither overlooks<sup>1</sup> a Failing, nor forgives it; but stamps Judgment and Execution immediately, thô upon a Member of itself; and is no less Ingrateful than common Beggars, who affront their Benefactors, without whose Charity their Understandings would starve.

Wherefore I cannot but excuse our Friend's Retirement, and shall

1. [Overlooks.]

take advantage of his absence so far, as to speak of his Discourses with more freedom, then I verily believe his Presence would bear.

As for the Style, you will find it *English*, such as Men speaks, which, according to *Horace*, is the Law and Rule of Language.<sup>2</sup> Nor do I perceive that the Gentleman intended more than his Title holds forth; common Discourses, which possibly were taken by an *Amanuensis*, and dispatcht without much Correction. Surely no Man would refuse the Conversation of an ingenious Friend, because he doth not speak like *Tully*;<sup>3</sup> And if the Conversation be so desirable, why should we quarrel with the same thing in Writing? Nay, it is very impolitick, by such Exactions of Labour and Pains, to discourage all Ingenious Persons from meddling in Print, whereby we lose the benefit of their Judgment, in matters of common concern.

Words are indeed a Felicity, which some have in great perfection; but many times, like a fair Face, prove Temptations to Vice; for I have known very good Sense neglected, and post-poned to an Elegance of Expression; whereas if Words are wanted, the whole Effort is made by pure strength of Reason, and that only is relied on.

The Lawyers in their Deeds, wave all the Decorums of Language, and regard only incontrovertible Expressions. The Merchants in their Policies and Exchanges, use no one Word but what is necessary to their Point, because the Matter and Substance only is intended, and not the Dress; Why then should Reasoners be incumbred, beyond what is necessary to make their Reason understood?

To speak very short, and yet clear, is a Vertue to be envied; and if directed to Persons, or Assemblies whose business is great, or made so by many Mens interposing in it, it is absolutely necessary; for your Discourse, if it be tedious, is better spared than the time; but it is not so in dealing with lazy Ignorance of any sort, or an Ear-itching Rabble, who are actually impertinent (as well as impetuous) and not sensible of cheat. And I may add, That in Writing, unless in the Epistolary way, (which being supposed hasty, ought to be short and figurative) an abundance of

2. *De Arte Poetica*, 70.

3. [I.e., Cicero.]



Words is more pardonable than obscurity, or want of Sence, because we take our own time, and have leisure to peruse it.

I will grant that amongst opulent and idle Persons, as well as Scholars, whose business lies in Words, the bare polishing of Language, is one of the most commendable Entertainments; and to them we resign it; for to Men of business, it is the most hateful thing, I mean, meer Idleness.

I grant also, that delicacy of Words, now most used in Poetry, is useful for disposing way-ward People to learn, or make them endure to read. But the World is not at such low ebb of Curiosity in this Age. Men are forward enough to run their Noses into Books, especially such as deal in Faction and Controversie: And it were well if they were either Wrote or Read with as much Integrity as Industry; we have no need of Sugar-plum devices to wheedle Men into Reading, they are Inquisitive enough; and if the Subject be their own Interest, I am of Opinion, if you can make 'em understand it, you may trust them.

As for the Method used in these Papers, there is so little of it affected, that I am afraid some will say there is none at all: I never thought that true Method consisted in affected Divisions, and Sub-divisions, Firsts, Seconds, Sub-firsts, &c. tho' all that is very useful in Works intended to be consulted as Repertories; but where the Understanding is to be informed, it is meer trash, and the business is often lost in it.

And in such Designs it is enough, if Things lie in the Order of Nature, and the Conclusion is not put before the Premisses, so that the course of the Argument is limpid, and intelligible: A Friend of mine used to say, That if the First Chapter were before the Second, it was all the Method he cared for, meaning only what I have observed, which I suppose you will find here.

This drudgery of Digesting, is another Excise upon Sence, which keeps back a great deal of it from coming forth; and without a singular tallent, and much exercise, it makes composing extreamly difficult. I do not understand why other Men, as well as *Montaigne*,<sup>4</sup> may not be indulged to ramble in Essays, provided the Sence fails not.

4. The first two books of Montaigne's "Essays" were published in 1580, the third in 1588.

The *Scalligerana*,<sup>5</sup> *Pirroana*,<sup>6</sup> *Pensees*,<sup>7</sup> and *Mr. Selden's Table-talk*,<sup>8</sup> are all heaps of incoherent scraps; yet for the wit and spirit esteemed; therefore let that which is most valuable, Reason and Truth be encouraged to come abroad, without imposing such chargeable Equipages upon it, whereby Writers are made to resemble Brewers Horses, very useful Animals, but arrant Drudges.

Methinks when I meet with a great deal of Firsting, and Seconding, I smell one who conceits himself an Author, a Creature as fulsome as any other sort of Impertinents. If there be Reason, and that understood, what could the formal Methodist add? Let me have the Cockle, and who will take the gay shell.

Now after all this it will be unjust, not to say somewhat of the Subject-matter of these Discourses, which is Commerce and Trade; and the Author's manner of Treating it.

He seems to be of a Temper different from most, who have meddled with this Subject in Publick; for it is manifest, his Knowledge and Experience of Trade is considerable, which could not be attained, unless he were a Trader himself; and yet it is not to be collected from anything he says, of what Nature his dealing hath been; for he speaks impartially of Trade in general, without warping to the Favour of any particular Interest. It hath been observed formerly, when Merchants have been consulted, and the Questions concerned only Trade in general, they agreed in Opinion; but when opposite Interests were concerned, they differed

5. "Scaligeriana, sive Excerpta ex ore Josephi Scaligeri"—a collection of the familiar conversations of Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609), the classicist and scholar—was first printed at The Hague in 1666, and in various editions thereafter. Des Maizeaux, a later editor and the literary historian of the work, characterizes it as "le pere de tous les livres qu' on a publiez sous le titre d' ANA" (cf. "Scaligerana, Thuana, Perroniana, Pithoeana, et Colomesiana . . . avec les notes de plusieurs savans." 2 vol. 12°. Amsterdam, 1740).

6. Probably "Perroniana," a collection of the epigrams and observations—critical, historical, and moral—of Cardinal du Perron, made by Christophe Dupuy and first published in 1669 (cf. Des Maizeaux, note 3, above).

7. Pascal's "Pensées" first appeared in 1670, eight years after the author's death, in garbled and fragmentary form.

8. Selden's "Table Talk" was edited by his secretary, Richard Milward, and printed in 1689.

*toto caelo.*<sup>9</sup> As for his Opinion touching Interest of Money, wherein he is clear, that it should be left freely to the Market, and not be restrained by Law, he is lyable to the same suspicion, which attends those of a different Judgment; that is, partiality to his own Interest; the difference is only in the supposed Cause, which in the one, is Wealth, and in the other Want. He hath given his Judgment with his Reasons, which every one is free to canvas; and there is no other means whereby a wise and honest Person can justify his Opinions in Publick Concerns.

In the next place, I find Trade here Treated at another rate, than usually hath been; I mean Philosophically: for the ordinary and vulgar conceits, being meer Husk and Rubbish, are waved; and he begins at the quick, from Principles indisputably true; and so proceeding with like care, comes to a Judgment of the nicest Disputes and Questions concerning Trade. And this with clearness enough, for he reduceth things to their Extrems, wherein all discriminations are most gross and sensible, and then shows them; and not in the state of ordinary concerns, whereof the terms are scarce distinguishable.

This Method of Reasoning hath been introduc'd with the new Philosophy, the old dealt in Abstracts more than Truths; and was employed about forming Hypotheses, to fit abundance of precarious and insensible Principles; such as the direct or oblique course of the Atomes in *vacuo*,<sup>10</sup> Matter and Form, Privation, solid Orbs, *fuga vacui*,<sup>11</sup> and many others of like nature; whereby they made sure of nothing; but upon the appearance of *Des Carte's* excellent dissertation *de Methodo*,<sup>12</sup> so much approved and accepted in our Ages, all those Chymera's soon dissolved and vanisht.

And hence it is, that Knowledge in great measure is become Mechanical; which word I need not interpret farther, than by noting, it here means, built upon clear and evident Truths. But yet this great Improvement of Reason which the World hath lately obtained, is not diffus'd

9. [By 180 degrees.]

10. [A vacuum.]

11. [(Nature) abhors a vacuum.]

12. [I.e., René Descartes (1596–1650), *Discourse on Method* (1637).]

enough, and resides chiefly with the studious and learned, the common People having but a small share; for they cannot abstract, so as to have a true and just thought of the most ordinary things, but are possest and full of the vulgar Errors of sense: Except in some few things that fall within the compass of their day-labour, and so gives them an Experience; As when a Common-Seaman, with all his Ignorance, proves a better Mechanick, for actual Service, than the Professor himself, with all his Learning.

The case of Trade is the same; for although to buy and sell, be the Employment of every man, more or less; and the Common People, for the most part, depend upon it for their daily subsistence; yet there are very few who consider Trade in general upon true Principles, but are satisfied to understand their own particular Trades, and which way to let themselves into immediate gain. And out of this active Sphere nothing is so fallacious, and full of Error, as mens Notions of Trade. And there is another Reason, why this matter seems less understood, than in truth it is. For whenever Men consult for the Publick Good, as for the advancement of Trade, wherein all are concerned, they usually esteem the immediate Interest of their own to be the common Measure of Good and Evil. And there are many, who to gain a little in their own Trades, care not how much others suffer; and each Man strives, that all others may be forc'd, in their dealings, to act subserviently for his Profit, but under the covert of the Publick.

So Clothiers would have men be forc'd to buy their Manufacture; and I may mention such as sell Wool, they would have men forc'd to buy of them at an high Price, though the Clothier loseth. The Tinnners would have their Tin dear, though the Merchant profits little: And in general all those who are lazy, and do not, or are not active enough, and cannot look out, to vent the Product of their Estates, or to Trade with it themselves, would have all Traders forc'd by Laws, to bring home to them sufficient Prizes, whether they gain or lose by it. And all the while, not one of them will endure to be under a force, to Sell, or Let their own Estates at lower rates, than the free Market of things will produce.

Now it is no wonder, that out of these Ingredients a strange Medley of Error should result, whereby seldom any Publick Order, which hath been establisht, and intended, or at least pretended for the good of Trade

in general, hath had a suitable Effect; but on the contrary, hath for the most part proved prejudicial, and thereupon, by common consent, been discontinued. But this is too copious Matter for a Preface, and tho' many Instances occur, I leave all, and return to the matter of Vulgar Errors in Trade.

It is not long since there was a great noise with Inquiries into the Balance of Exportation and Importation; and so into the Balance of Trade, as they called it. For it was fancyed that if we brought more Commodities in, than we carried out, we were in the High-way to Ruin. In like manner have we heard much said against the *East-India* Trade, against the *French* Trade, with many other like politick conceits in Trade; most of which, Time and better Judgment hath disbanded; but others succeed in their room, according as new Persons find Encouragement to invent, and inspire, for promoting their private Interest, by imposing on those, who desire to be cunning. And now we complain for want of Money in specie, that Bullion is Exported or mis-employed to other uses, than making Money; and ascribe the deadness of Trade, especially of Corn, and Cattel in the Country, to this; and hope by a Regulation of the Bullion-Trade, and stinting the Price, except it be in Money, to make a thorough Reformation, and give new Life to all things, with much more, *ejusdem farinae*,<sup>13</sup> which I do not particularize, this being enough for a taste.

Now it may appear strange to hear it said,

That the whole World as to Trade, is but as one Nation or People, and therein Nations are as Persons.

That the loss of a Trade with one Nation, is not that only, separately considered, but so much of the Trade of the World rescinded and lost, for all is combined together.

That there can be no Trade unprofitable to the Publick; for if any prove so, men leave it off; and wherever the Traders thrive, the Publick, of which they are a part, thrives also.

That to force Men to deal in any prescrib'd manner, may profit such as happen to serve them; but the Publick gains not, because it is taking from one Subject, to give to another.

13. [Of the same grain, the same nature.]

That no Laws can set Prizes<sup>14</sup> in Trade, the Rates of which, must and will make themselves: But when such Laws do happen to lay any hold, it is so much Impediment to Trade, and therefore prejudicial.

That Money is a Merchandize, whereof there may be a glut, as well as a scarcity, and that even to an Inconvenience.

That a People cannot want Money to serve the ordinary dealing, and more than enough they will not have.

That no Man shall be the richer for the making much Money, nor have any part of it, but as he buys it for an equivalent price.

That the free Coynage is a perpetual Motion found out, whereby to Melt and Coyn without ceasing, and so to feed Goldsmiths and Coyners at the Publick Charge.

That debasing the Coyn is defrauding one another, and to the Publick there is no sort of Advantage from it; for that admits no Character, or Value, but Intrinsic.

That the sinking Money by Allay or Weight is all one.

That Exchange and ready Money, are the same, nothing but Carriage and re-carriage being saved.

That Money Exported in Trade is an increase to the Wealth of the Nation; but spent in War, and Payments abroad, is so much Impoverishment.

In short, That all favour to one Trade or Interest against another, is an Abuse, and cuts so much of Profit from the Publick. With many other like Paradoxes, no less strange to most men, than true in themselves; but in my Opinion, clearly flowing from the Principles, and Discourses that follow, which you may freely peruse and censure, for now I have done.

Perhaps my unknown Confident<sup>15</sup> may think me too sawcy, for putting my Oar into his Boat, and I will not excuse my self to him, otherwise than by demanding the same Liberty he hath taken; that is, to have a fling at the World; and as yet the Advantage is his, for he hath two, and better, for my one. And so Farewel.

14. [Prices.]

15. [Confidant.]

## A DISCOURSE Concerning the Abatement of INTEREST

Arguments for Abatement of Interest are many, *viz.*

- I. When Interest is less, Trade is encourag'd, and the Merchant can be a Gainer; whereas, when it is great, the Usurer, or Money-owner takes all.
- II. The *Dutch*, with whom Interest is low, Trade cheaper, and under-sell us.
- III. Land falls in value, as Interest riseth.

With divers others, whereof the Facts may be true, but proceed from another Cause, and conduce nothing to the purpose for which they are alledg'd.

I shall not formally apply myself to answer all the Arguments and Discourses, that commonly are found in Pamphlets, and Conversation upon this Subject; as if I were to Advocate the Cause of Interest: But give my thoughts impartially in the whole matter, with regard to the Profit of the whole Nation, and to no particular Persons project: Wherein I hope to propose, that which may resolve any doubt that can be raised, and leave every one to apply it, as they think fit.

The Question to be considered is, Whether the Government have reason by a Law, to prohibit the taking more than 4 *l. per Cent.* Interest for Money lent, or to leave the Borrower and Lender to make their own Bargains.

In the Disquisition of this, many things are to be considered, and particularly such as relate to Trade, of which a true Notion will set right a World of Mistakes, wherefore that now shall be chiefly treated of.

Trade is nothing else but a Commutation of Superfluities; for instance: I give of mine, what I can spare, for somewhat of yours, which I want, and you can spare.

Thus Trade, whilst it is restrained within the limits of a Town, Country, or Nation, signifieth only the Peoples supplying each other with Conveniences, out of what that Town, Country, or Nation affords.

And in this, he who is most diligent, and raiseth most Fruits, or

maketh most of Manufactory, will abound most in what others make, or raise; and consequently be free from Want, and enjoy most Conveniences, which is truly to be Rich, altho' there were no such thing as Gold, Silver, or the like amongst them.

Mettals are very necessary for many Uses, and are to be reckon'd among the Fruits and Manufactories of the World. And of these, Gold and Silver being by nature very fine, and more scarce than others, are higher prized; and a little of them is very reasonably esteem'd equal in value with a great quantity of other Mettals, &c. For which reason, and moreover that they are imperishable, as well as convenient for easie stowage and removal, and not from any Laws, they are made a Standard, or common Measure to deal with; and all Mankind concur in it, as every one knows, therefore I need not enlarge further in this matter.

Now it is to be consider'd, that Mankind being fallen into a way of commuting in this manner, to serve their occasions, some are more provident, others more profuse; some by their Industry and Judgment raise more Fruits from the Earth, than they consume in supplying their own occasions; and then the surplus remains with them, and is Property or Riches.

And Wealth thus contracted, is either commuted for other Mens Land (supposing all Men to have had some) or massed up in heaps of Goods; be the same of Mettals, or anything valuable. And those are the Rich, who transmit what they have to their Posterity; whereby particular Families become rich; and of such are compounded Cities, Countries, Nations, &c.

And it will be found, that as some particular Men in a Town grow richer, and thrive better than others; so also do Nations, who by Trade serving the occasions of their Neighbours, supply themselves with what they have occasion for from abroad; which done, the rest is laid up, and is Silver, Gold, &c. for as I said, these being commutable for everything, and of small bulk, are still preferr'd to be laid up, till occasion shall call them out to supply other Necessaries wanted.

Now Industry and Ingenuity having thus distinguisht Men into Rich and Poor; What is the consequence? One rich Man hath Lands, not only more than he can manage, but so much, that letting them out to others, he is supplied with a large over-plus, so needs no farther care.



Another rich Man hath Goods; that is, Mettals, Manufactures, &c. in great quantity, with these he serves his own occasions, and then commutes the rest in Trade; that is, supplies others with what they want, and takes in exchange what they had of, beyond their own occasions, whereby managing cunningly, he must always advance.

Now as there are more Men to Till the Ground than have Land to Till, so also there will be many who want Stock to manage; and also (when a Nation is grown rich) there will be Stock for Trade in many hands, who either have not the skill, or care not for the trouble of managing it in Trade.

But as the Landed Man lets his Land, so these still lett their Stock; this latter is call'd Interest, but is only Rent for Stock, as the other is for Land. And in several Languages, hiring of Money, and Lands, are Terms of common use; and it is so also in some Countries<sup>16</sup> in *England*.

Thus to be a Landlord, or a Stock-lord is the same thing; the Landlord hath the advantage only in this: That his Tenant cannot carry away the Land, as the Tenant of the other may the Stock; and therefore Land ought to yield less profit than Stock, which is let out at the greater hazard.

These things consider'd, it will be found, that as plenty makes cheapness in other things, as Corn, Wool, &c. when they come to Market in greater Quantities than there are Buyers to deal for, the Price will fall; so if there be more Lenders than Borrowers, Interest will also fall; wherefore it is not low Interest makes Trade, but Trade increasing, the Stock of the Nation makes Interest low.

It is said, that in *Holland* Interest is lower than in *England*. I answer, It is; because their Stock is greater than ours. I cannot hear that they ever made a Law to restrain Interest, but am certainly informed, that at this day, the Currant Interest between Merchant and Merchant, when they disburse Money for each others Account, is 6 *per Cent.* and the Law justifies it.

I allow Money is many times lent at 3, and 4 *per Cent.* but it is upon Mortgages, out of which the State hath a Duty, and by the course of Titles there, such dealing is perfectly safe; and this is still by private consent and agreement, and not by co-ersion and order of Law. The like

16. [Regions.]

often happens here, when poor Widows and Orphans purchase the Security of their Livelihoods, and punctual Payment, by lending at small Interest, to such as need not the Money.

It might not be amiss in this place, to say somewhat of the Publick Banks that are in Forreign Parts, as *Amsterdam*, *Venice*, &c. but that is a Subject I have not time to dilate upon: I shall only say, that it is a cunning way of supplying the Government once with a great Sum; and as long as the Government stands, it is no loss to them that have the Credit, nor no great Inconveniency; for all Bills of Exchange are made by Law payable in Bank, and not otherwise; for Dealers in Exchanges it is best that way, and such as want their Money, find no difficulty in selling their Credits, the price of which riseth and falleth according to Demanders, as of other things.

I do not understand that true, two<sup>17</sup> Banks pay any Interest; it is true there are several Funds, *viz.* The Mint in *Venice*, and the Chamber in *Amsterdam*, with several others in those and other Cities, where Money is put out at Interest for Lives, and several other ways, and at different Rates, more or less, according to the Credit these Funds have, which are the Security; and these may, by mistake, be called the Banks, which they are not, being only such as the Chamber of *London*, *East-India-House*, &c. were.

I do not believe, but the Usurer, according to the saying, will take half a Loaf, rather than no bread: But I averr, that high Interest will bring Money out from Hoards, Plate, &c. into Trade, when low Interest will keep it back.

Many Men of great Estates, keep by them for State<sup>18</sup> and Honour, great Quantities of Plate, Jewels, &c. which certainly they will be more inclin'd to do, when Interest is very low, than when it is high.

Such as have nothing to subsist by, but the Interest of Money, must either let it out, or Trade with it themselves, and be contented with what they can get; but that hinders not, but very many other Men, who are rich, and not so prest, may, if Interest be very low, choose to make use of their Stocks in Jewels, Plate, &c. rather than run the hazards, and be at

17. *sic.*

18. [Status or dignity.]

the trouble of dealing with necessitous and knavish Men, such as many Borrowers are, for inconsiderable gains.

So that it cannot be denied, but the lowering of Interest may, and probably will keep some Money from coming abroad into Trade; whereas on the contrary, high Interest certainly brings it out.

Next is to be considered, that Dealings between Borrowers and Lenders are of two kinds: 1. Upon Mortgage, or Pawn. 2. Upon Personal Security, and that either by single Bond, or with Sureties; all which, as they differ in goodness, so ought in reason to bear different Prizes. Shall any Man be bound to lend a single Person, upon the same Terms, as others lend upon Mortgages, or Joynt Obligations?

Then again it is to be considered, that the Moneys imployed at Interest in this Nation, are not near the Tenth part, disposed to Trading People, wherewith to manage their Trades; but are for the most part lent for the supplying of Luxury, and to support the Expence of Persons, who though great Owners of Lands, yet spend faster than their Lands bring in; and being loath to sell, choose rather to mortgage their Estates.

So that in truth an Ease to Interest, will rather be a Support to Luxury, than to Trade; the poor Trading Man, who hath but a narrow Stock, or none at all, supplies himself by buying Goods of rich Men at time, and thereby pays Interest, not at the rate of 5, 6, or 8, but 10, 12, and more *per Cent*. And this is not in the Power of any Legislature to prevent, or remedy.

It may be said, let him take Money at Interest, and not buy at Time. But then Men must be found, that will lend; the Legislative must provide a Fund to borrow upon.

The Trade of setting out Ships, runs very much upon this course, wherein it is usual to Bum'em (as they call it) at 36 *per Cent*. And this cannot be remedied; and if it were, it would be a stop, as well to the Building, as the setting out of many Ships; whereby, after all, not only the publick, but the private Persons concern'd are Gainers for the most part.

Thus when all things are considered, it will be found best for the Nation to leave the Borrowers and the Lender to make their own Bargains, according to the Circumstances they lie under; and in so doing you will follow the course of the wise *Hollanders*, so often quoted on this account: and the consequences will be, that when the Nation thrives, and grows

rich, Money will be to be had upon good terms, but the clean contrary will fall out, when the Nation grows poorer and poorer.

Let any one Answer me, why do not the Legislators in those poor Countries, where Interest is at 10, & 12 *per Cent*, make such Laws to restrain Interest, and reduce it for the good of the People? If they should attempt it, it wou'd soon appear, that such Laws would not be effectual to do it. For when there are more Borrowers than Lenders, as in poor Countries, where if a rich Man hath 100 *l.* to dispose, and there are four, five or more Men striving for it; the Law would be evaded by underhand Bargains, making Loans in Goods, drawing Bills, and a thousand Ways beside; which cannot be prevented.

It is probable that when Laws restrain Interest of Money, below the Price, which the Reason of Trade settles, and Traders cannot (as we will suppose) evade the Law, or not without great difficulty, or hazard, and have not Credit to borrow at Legal Interest, to make, or increase their Stock; so much of Trade is lopt off; and there cannot be well a greater obstruction to diminish Trade then that would be. The consideration of all these Matters, makes out an universal Maxime, That as more Buyers than Sellers raiseth the price of a Commodity, so more Borrowers than Lenders, will raise Interest.

And the State may with as much Justice make a Law that Lands which heretofore have been Lett for 10 *s.* *per Acre*, shall not now be Lett for above 8 *s.* *per Acre*, as that Money, or Stock, from 5 *per Cent*, shall be Lett for 4 *per Cent*, the Property being as good, and as much the Substance of the Kingdom in the one, as in the other.

I will not say any thing to the Theological Arguments against Interest of Moneys; by those 3 *per Cent* is no more lawful, than 4, or 12. But this I shall maintain Politically, that if you take away Interest, you take away Borrowing and Lending. And in consequence the Gentry, who are behind hand,<sup>19</sup> be it for what cause soever, must sell, and cannot Mortgage; which will bring down the Price of Land. And the Trader whatever his skill is, if he hath no Stock, must either sit still, or buy at Time, which is Interest under another Name. And they who are poor, will al-

19. [I.e., late, in arrears.]

ways be so, and we should soon relapse into the state of One Thousand Years ago.

And whereas the Stock of the Nation is now reckon'd great, let it be fairly valued, and it will be found much less than it seems to be; for all the Monies that are owing upon Land Securities, must be struck off, and not estimated; or else you will have a wrong Account; for if a Gentleman of 500 *l. per Annum*, owes 8000 *l.* and you value<sup>20</sup> his Land, and the Lender's Stock both, you make an account of the same things twice.

And whereas we make great Accounts of Money'd Men in the Nation, in truth there are but few; for suppose all that have lent upon Mortgage, had Land for their Moneys, as indeed in strictness of Law they have, there wou'd be but few Money'd Men in the Nation left. The borrowing of Money of one, to pay another, call'd, Robbing of *Peter* to pay *Paul*, so much practis'd now-a-days, makes us think the Nation far richer than it is.

## A Discourse of COYNED MONEY

In the former Discourse, it hath been already made appear, that Gold and Silver for their scarcity, have obtained in small quantities, to equal in value far greater quantities of other Metals, &c. And farther, from their easie Removal, and convenient Custody, have also obtained to be the common Measure in the World between Man and Man in their dealings, as well for Land, Houses, &c., as for Goods and other Necessaries.

For the greater Improvement of this Convenience, and to remove some Difficulties, which would be very troublesome, about knowing quantities and qualities in common and ordinary dealing: Princes and States have made it a matter of Publick concern, to ascertain the Allay,<sup>21</sup> and to determine the Weights, *viz.* the quantities of certain Pieces, which we call Coyn, or Money; and such being distinguish'd by Stamps, and Inscriptions, it is made difficult, and highly Penal to Counterfeit them.

20. [Appraise.]

21. [Alloy.]

By this means the Trade of the World is made easie, and all the numerous species of several Commodities have a common Measure. Besides the Gold and Silver being thus coyned into Money, and so become more useful for Commerce than in the Log or Block, hath in all places, except in *England* since the free Coynage, reasonably obtained a greater value than it had before: And that not only above the real charge of making it so, but is become a State-Revenue (except as before) tho' not very great. Whereas if Silver coyned and uncoyned bore the same rate, as it doth with us in *England*, where it is coyned at the Charge of the Publick, it will be lyable frequently to be melted down, as I shall shew anon.

Money being thus the Common Measure of Buying and Selling, every body who hath any thing to sell, and cannot procure Chapmen for it, is presently apt to think, that want of Money in the Kingdom, or Country is the cause why his Goods do not go off; and so, want of Money, is the common Cry; which is a great mistake, as shall be shewn. I grant all stop in Trade proceeds from some cause; but it is not from the want of specifick Money, there being other Reasons for it; as will appear by the following Discourse.

No Man is richer for having his Estate all in Money, Plate, &c. lying by him, but on the contrary, he is for that reason the poorer. That man is richest, whose Estate is in a growing condition, either in Land at Farm, Money at Interest, or Goods in Trade: If any man, out of an humour, should turn all his Estate into Money, and keep it dead, he would soon be sensible of Poverty growing upon him, whilst he is eating out of the quick stock.

But to examine the matter closer, what do these People want, who cry out for Money? I will begin with the Beggar; he wants, and importunes for Money: What would he do with it if he had it? buy Bread, &c. Then in truth it is not Money, but Bread, and other Necessaries for Life that he wants. Well then; the Farmer complains, for the want of Money; surely it is not for the Beggar's Reason, to sustain Life, or pay Debts; but he thinks that were more Money in the Country, he should have a Price for his Goods. Then it seems Money is not his want, but a Price for his Corn, and Cattel, which he would sell, but cannot. If it be askt, if the want of Money be not, what then is the reason, why he cannot get a price? I answer, it must proceed from one of these three Causes.

1. Either there is too much Corn and Cattel in the Country, so that most who come to Market have need of selling, as he hath, and few of buying: Or, 2. There wants the usual vent abroad, by Transportation, as in time of War, when Trade is unsafe, or not permitted. Or, 3. The Consumption fails, as when men by reason of Poverty, do not spend so much in their Houses as formerly they did; wherefore it is not the increase of specifick Money, which would at all advance the Farmers Goods, but the removal of any of these three Causes, which do truly keep down the Market.

The Merchant and Shop-keeper want Money in the same manner, that is, they want a Vent for the Goods they deal in, by reason that the Markets fail, as they will always upon any cause, like what I have hinted. Now to consider what is the true source of Riches, or in the common Phrase, plenty of Money, we must look a little back, into the nature and steps of Trade.

Commerce and Trade, as hath been said, first springs from the Labour of Man, but as the Stock increases, it dilates more and more. If you suppose a Country to have nothing in it but the Land it self, and the Inhabitants; it is plain that at first, the People have only the Fruits of the Earth, and Metals raised from the Bowels of it, to Trade withal, either by carrying out into Foreign Parts, or by selling to such as will come to buy of them, whereby they may be supplied with the Goods of other Countries wanted there.

In process of time, if the People apply themselves industriously, they will not only be supplied, but advance to a great overplus of Foreign Goods, which improv'd, will enlarge their Trade. Thus the *English* Nation will sell unto the *French*, *Spaniards*, *Turk*, &c. not only the product of their own Country, as Cloath, Tin, Lead, &c. but also what they purchase of others, as Sugar, Pepper, Callicoes, &c. still buying where Goods are produc'd, and cheap, and transporting them to Places where they are wanted, making great advantage thereby.

In this course of Trade, Gold and Silver are in no sort different from other Commodities, but are taken from them who have Plenty, and carried to them who want, or desire them, with as good profit as other Merchandizes. So that an active prudent Nation groweth rich, and the sluggish Drones grow poor; and there cannot be any Policy other than this,

which being introduc'd and practis'd, shall avail to increase Trade and Riches.

But this Proposition, as single<sup>22</sup> and plain as it is, is seldom so well understood, as to pass with the generality of Mankind; but they think by force of Laws, to retain in their Country all the Gold and Silver which Trade brings in; and thereby expect to grow rich immediately: All which is a profound Fallacy, and hath been a Remora,<sup>23</sup> whereby the growing Wealth of many Countries have been obstructed.

The Case will more plainly appear, if it be put of a single Merchant, or if you please to come nearer the point, of a City or County only.

Let a Law be made, and what is more, be observ'd, that no Man whatsoever shall carry any Money out of a particular Town, County, or Division, with liberty to carry Goods of any sort: so that all the Money which every one brings with him, must be left behind, and none be carried out.

The consequence of this would be, that such Town, or County were cut off from the rest of the Nation; and no Man would dare to come to Market with his Money there; because he must buy, whether he likes, or not: and on the other side, the People of that place could not go to other Markets as Buyers, but only as Sellers, being not permitted to carry any Money out with them.

Now would not such a Constitution as this, soon bring a Town or County to a miserable Condition, with respect to their Neighbours, who have free Commerce, whereby the Industrious gain from the slothful and luxurious part of Mankind? The Case is the same, if you extend your thought from a particular Nation, and the several Divisions, and Cities, with the Inhabitants in them, to the whole World, and the several Nations, and Governments in it. And a Nation restrained in its Trade, of which Gold and Silver is a principal, if not an essential Branch, would suffer, and grow poor, as a particular place within a Country, as I have discoursed. A Nation in the World, as to Trade, is in all respects like a City in a Kingdom, or Family in a City.

Now since the Increase of Trade is to be esteem'd the only cause that Wealth and Money increase, I will add some farther Considerations upon that subject.

22. [Particular.]

23. [A let, or obstacle.]



The main spur to Trade, or rather to Industry and Ingenuity, is the exorbitant Appetites of Men, which they will take pains to gratifie, and so be disposed to work, when nothing else will incline them to it; for did Men content themselves with bare Necessaries, we should have a poor World.

The Glutton works hard to purchase Delicacies, wherewith to gorge himself; the Gamester, for Money to venture at Play; the Miser, to hoard; and so others. Now in their pursuit of those Appetites, other Men less exorbitant are benefitted; and tho' it may be thought few profit by the Miser, yet it will be found otherwise, if we consider, that besides the humour of every Generation, to dissipate what another had collected, there is benefit from the very Person of a covetous Man; for if he labours with his own hands, his Labour is very beneficial to them who employ him; if he doth not work, but profit by the Work of others, then those he sets on work have benefit by their being employed.

Countries which have sumptuary Laws, are generally poor; for when Men by those Laws are confin'd to narrower Expence than otherwise they would be, they are at the same time discouraged from the Industry and Ingenuity which they would have imployed in obtaining wherewithal to support them, in the full latitude of Expence they desire.

It is possible Families may be supported by such means, but then the growth of Wealth in the Nation is hindered; for that never thrives better, then when Riches are tost from hand to hand.

The meaner sort seeing their Fellows become rich, and great, are spurr'd up to imitate their Industry. A Tradesman sees his Neighbour keep a Coach, presently all his Endeavors is at work to do the like, and many times is beggered by it; however the extraordinary Application he made, to support his Vanity, was beneficial to the Publick, tho' not enough to answer his false Measures as to himself.

It will be objected, That the Home Trade signifies nothing to the enriching a Nation, and that the increase of Wealth comes out of Forreign Trade.

I answer, That what is commonly understood by Wealth, *viz.* Plenty, Bravery, Gallantry, &c. cannot be maintained without Forreign Trade. Nor in truth, can Forreign Trade subsist without the Home Trade, both being connected together.

I have toucht upon these matters concerning Trade, and Riches in

general, because I conceive a true Notion of them, will correct many common Errors, and more especially conduce to the Proposition I chiefly aim to prove; which is, that Gold and Silver, and, out of them, Money are nothing but the Weights and Measures, by which Traffick is more conveniently carried on, then could be done without them: and also a proper Fund for a surplusage of Stock to be deposited in.

In confirmation of this, we may take Notice, That Nations which are very poor, have scarce any Money, and in the beginnings of Trade have often made use of something else; as *Sueden* hath used Copper, and the *Plantations*, Sugar and Tobacco, but not without great Inconveniences; and still<sup>24</sup> as Wealth hath increas'd, Gold and Silver hath been introduc'd, and drove out the others, as now almost in the *Plantations* it hath done.

It is not necessary absolutely to have a Mint for the making Money plenty, tho' it be very expedient; and a just benefit is lost by the want of it, where there is none; for it hath been observed, that where no Mints were, Trade hath not wanted a full supply of Money; because if it be wanted, the Coyn of other Princes will become currant, as in *Ireland*, and the *Plantations*; so also in *Turky*, where the Money of the Country is so minute, that it is inconvenient for great Payments; and therefore the Turkish Dominions are supplied by almost all the Coyns of Christendom, the same being currant there.

But a Country which useth Forreign Coyns, hath great disadvantage from it; because they pay strangers, for what, had they a Mint of their own, they might make themselves. For Coyned Money, as was said, is more worth than Uncoyned Silver of the same weight and allay; that is, you may buy more Uncoyned Silver, of the same fineness with the Money, than the Money weighs; which advantage the Stranger hath for the Coynage.

If it be said, That the contrary sometimes happens, and coyned Money shall be current for less than Bullion shall sell for. I answer, That where-ever this happens, the Coyned Money being undervalued, shall be melted down into Bullion, for the immediate Gain that is had from it.

Thus it appears, that if you have no Mint whereby to increase your

24. [To this time, till now.]

Money, yet if you are a rich People, and have Trade, you cannot want Specifick Coyn, to serve your occasions in dealing.

The next thing to be shewed is, That if your Trade pours in never so much Money upon you, you have no more advantage by the being of it Money, then you should have were it in Logs, or Blocks; save only that Money is much better for Transportation than Logs are.

For when Money grows up to a greater quantity than Commerce requires, it comes to be of no greater value, than uncoyned Silver, and will occasionally be melted down again.

Then let not the care of Specifick Money torment us so much; for a People that are rich cannot want it, and if they make none, they will be supplied with the Coyn of other Nations; and if never so much be brought from abroad, or never so much coyned at home, all that is more than what the Commerce of the Nation requires, is but Bullion, and will be treated as such; and coyned Money, like wrought Plate at Second hand, shall sell but for the Intrinsick.

I call to witness the vast Sums that have been coyned in *England*, since the free Coynage was set up; What is become of it all? no body believes it to be in the Nation, and it cannot well be all transported, the Penalties for so doing being so great. The case is plain, it being exported, as I verily believe little of it is, the Melting-Pot devours all.

The rather, because that Practice is so easie, profitable, and safe from all possibility of being detected, as every one knows it is. And I know no intelligent Man who doubts, but the New Money goes this way.

Silver and Gold, like other Commodities, have their ebbings and flowings: Upon the arrival of Quantities from *Spain*, the Mint commonly gives the best price; that is, coyned Silver, for uncoyned Silver, weight for weight. Wherefore is it carried into the *Tower*, and coyned? not long after there will come a demand for Bullion, to be Exported again: If there is none, but all happens to be in Coyn, What then? Melt it down again; there's no loss in it, for the Coyning cost the Owners nothing.

Thus the Nation hath been abused, and made to pay for the twisting of straw, for Asses to eat. If the Merchant were made to pay the price of the Coynage, he would not have sent his Silver to the *Tower* without Consideration; and coyned Money would always keep a value above

uncoyned Silver: which is now so far from being the case, that many times it is considerably under, and generally the King of *Spain's* Coyne here is worth One penny *per* Ounce more than our New Money.

This Nation, for many Years last past, hath groaned, and still groans under the abuse of clipt Money, which with respect to their Wisdom, is a great mistake; and the *Irish* whom we ridicule so much, when in Peace, would not be so gulled, but weighed their (Pieces of Eight) Cobbs, as they call them, Piece by Piece; this Errour springs from the same Source with the rest, and needs no other Cure then will soon result from Non-currency. Whereof I shall set down my thoughts.

There is great fear, that if clipt Money be not taken, there will be no Money at all. I am certain, that so long as clipt Money is taken, there will be little other: And is it not strange, that scarce any Nation, or People in the whole World, take diminisht Money by Tale;<sup>25</sup> but the *English*?

What is the reason that a New Half-crown-piece, if it hath the least snip taken from the edge, will not pass; whereas an Old Half-crown clipt to the very quick, and not intrinsically worth Eighteen Pence, shall be currant?

I know no reason, why a Man should take the one, more than the other; I am sure, that if New Money should pass clipt, there would soon be enough served so. And I do not in the least doubt, unless the currency of clipt Money be stopt, it will not be very long before every individual piece of the Old Coyne be clipt.

And if this be not remedied, for fear of the Evil now, how will it be born hereafter, when it will be worse? surely at length it will become insupportable, and remedy itself as Groats<sup>26</sup> have done; but let them look out, in whose time it shall happen; we are all shoving the Evil-Day as far off as may be, but it will certainly come at last.

I do not think the great Evil is so hard to be remedied, nor so chargeable as some have judged; but if rightly managed, it may be done with no intolerable loss, some there will be, and considerable; but when I reflect where it will fall, I cannot think it grievous.

The general Opinion is, That it cannot be done otherwise, then by

25. [Reckoning, numerical account.]

26. [Pieces valued at 4 pence.]

calling in of all the Old Money, and changing of it, for doing which the whole Nation must contribute by a general Tax; but I do not approve of this way, for several Reasons.

For it will be a matter of great trouble, and will require many hands to execute, who will expect, and deserve good pay; which will add to the Evil, and increase the Charge of the Work; and the Trust of it, is also very great, and may be vastly abused.

Now before I give any Opinion for the doing this thing, let some estimate be made of the loss, wherein I will not undertake to compute the Total, but only how the same may fall out in One Hundred Pound: There may be found in it Ten Pound of good New Money, then rests Ninety Pound; and of that I will suppose half to be clipt Money, and half good; so there will be but Five and Forty, in One Hundred Pounds, whereupon there will be any loss; and that will not surely be above a Third part: so I allow 15 *l. per Cent.* for the loss by clipt Money, which is with the most, and in such Computes, it is safest to err on that side.

Now in case it should be thought fit, that the King should in all the Receipts of the Publick Revenue, forbid the taking of clipt Coyn, unless the Subject were content to pay it by weight at 5 *s. 2 d. per Ounce*, every Piece being cut in Two, (which must be especially and effectually secured to be done) I grant it would be a great surprize, but no great cause of Complaint when nothing is required, but that the Publick Revenue may be paid in lawful *English* Money.

And those who are to make Payments, must either find good Money, or clip in two their cropt Money, and part with it on such terms; by this Example it would likewise be found, that in a short time, all Men would refuse clipt Money in common Payment.

Now let us consider, where the loss would light, which I have estimated to be about 15 *per Cent.*

We are apt to make Over-estimates of the Quantities of current Money; for we see it often, and know it not again; and are not willing to consider how very a little time it stays in a place; and altho' every one desires to have it, yet none, or very few care for keeping it, but they are forthwith contriving to dispose it; knowing that from all the Money that lies dead, no benefit is to be expected, but it is a certain loss.

The Merchant and Gentleman keep their Money for the most part,

with Goldsmiths, and Scriveners; and they, instead of having Ten Thousand Pounds in Cash by them, as their Accounts shew they should have, of other Mens ready Money, to be paid at sight, have seldom One Thousand in Specie; but depend upon a course of Trade, whereby Money comes in as fast as it is taken out: Wherefore I conclude, that the Specifick Money of this Nation is far less than the common Opinion makes.

Now suppose all the loss by clipt Money should happen and fall where the Cash is, it would be severe in very few Places. It could do no great harm to Hoards of Money; because those who intend to keep Money, will be sure to lay up that which is good. It would not signifie much to the poor Man, for he many times hath none; and for the most part, if he hath any, it is very little, seldome Five Shillings at a time. The Farmer is supposed to pay his Landlord, as fast as he gets Money; so it is not likely he should be catcht with much: Wherefore it will light chiefly upon Trading Men, who may sometimes be found with Hundreds by them; and frequently not with many Pounds. Those who happen to have such great Cashes at such time would sustain loss.

In short, clipt Money is an Evil, that the longer it is born with, the harder will the Cure be. And if the Loss therein be lain on the Publick, (as the Common Project is) the Inconveniencies are (as hath been shewed) very great; but in the other way of Cure it is not such a terrible Grievance, as most Men have imagined it would be.

So to conclude, when these Reasons, which have been hastily and confusedly set down, are duly considered, I doubt not but we shall joyn in one uniform Sentiment: That Laws to hamper Trade, whether Foreign, or Domestick, relating to Money, or other Merchandizes, are not Ingredients to make a People Rich, and abounding in Money, and Stock. But if Peace be procured, easie Justice maintained, the Navigation not clogg'd, the Industrious encouraged, by indulging them in the participation of Honours, and Employments in the Government, according to their Wealth and Characters, the Stock of the Nation will increase, and consequently Gold and Silver abound, Interest be easie, and Money cannot be wanting.

## Postscript

*Upon farther Consideration of the Foregoing Matters, I think fit to add the following Notes.*

When a Nation is grown Rich, Gold, Silver, Jewels, and every thing useful, or desirable, (as I have already said) will be plentiful; and the Fruits of the Earth will purchase more of them, than before, when People were poorer: As a fat Oxe in former Ages, was not sold for more Shillings, than now Pounds. The like takes place in Labourers Wages, and every thing whatever; which confirms the Universal Maxim I have built upon, *viz.* That Plenty of any thing makes it cheap.

Therefore Gold and Silver being now plentiful, a Man hath much more of it for his labour, for his Corn, for his Cattle, &c. then could be had Five Hundred Years ago, when, as must be owned, there was not near so much by many parts as now.

Notwithstanding this, I find many, who seem willing to allow, that this Nation at present, abounds with Gold and Silver, in Plate and Bullion; but are yet of Opinion, That coyned Money is wanted to carry on the Trade, and that were there more Specifick Money, Trade would increase, and we should have better Markets for every thing.

That this is a great Error, I think the foregoing Papers makes out: but to clear it a little farther, let it be considered, that Money is a Manufacture of Bullion wrought in the Mint. Now if the Materials are ready, and the Workmen also, 'tis absurd to say, the Manufacture is wanted.

For instance: Have you Corn, and do you want Meal? Carry the Corn to the Mill, and grind it. Yes; but I want Meal, because others will not carry their Corn; and I have none: say you so; then buy Corn of them, and carry it to the Mill your self. This is exactly the Case of Money. A very rich Man hath much Plate, for Honour and Show; whereupon a poorer Man thinks, if it were coyned into Money, the Publick, and his self among the rest, would be the better for it; but he is utterly mistaken; unless at the same time you oblige the rich Man to squander his new coyn'd Money away.

For if he lays it up, I am sure the matter is not mended: if he commutes it for Diamonds, Pearl, &c. the Case is still the same; it is but changed

from one hand to another: and it may be the Money is dispatcht to the *Indies* to pay for those Jewels: then if he buys Land, it is no more than changing the hand, and regarding all Persons, except the Dealers only, the Case is still the same. Money will always have an Owner, and never goeth a Beggar for Entertainment, but must be purchast for valuable consideration in *solido*.

If the use of Plate were prohibited, then it were a sumptuary Law, and, as such, would be a vast hindrance to the Riches and Trade of the Nation: for now seeing every Man hath Plate in his House, the Nation is possest of a solid Fund, consisting in those Mettals, which all the World desire, and would willingly draw from us; and this in far greater measure than would be, if Men were not allowed that liberty. For the poor Tradesman, out of an ambition to have a Piece of Plate upon his Cupboard, works harder to purchase it, than he would do if that humour were restrain'd as I have said elsewhere.

There is required for carrying on the Trade of the Nation, a determinate Sum of Specifick Money, which varies, and is sometimes more, sometimes less, as the Circumstances we are in requires. War time calls for more Money than time of Peace, because every one desires to keep some by him, to use upon Emergencies; not thinking it prudent to rely upon Moneys currant in dealing, as they do in times of Peace, when Payments are more certain.

This ebbing and flowing of Money, supplies and accommodates itself, without any aid of Politicians. For when Money grows scarce, and begins to be hoarded, then forthwith the Mint works, till the occasion be filled up again. And on the other side, when Peace brings out the Hoards, and Money abounds, the Mint not only ceaseth, but the overplus of Money will be presently melted down, either to supply the Home Trade, or for Transportation.

Thus the Buckets work alternately, when Money is scarce, Bullion is coyn'd; when Bullion is scarce, Money is melted. I do not allow that both should be scarce at one and the same time; for that is a state of Poverty, and will not be, till we are exhausted, which is besides my subject.

Some have fancied, that if by a Law the Ounce of Silver were restrained to 5 *s.* value, in all dealings, and at the *Tower* the same were coyned into 5 *s.* 4 *d.* or 5 *s.* 6 *d.* *per* Ounce, all the Plate in *England* would



soon be coyned. The answer to this, in short, is: That the Principle they build upon is impossible. How can any Law hinder me from giving another Man, what I please for his Goods? The Law may be evaded a thousand ways. As be it so: I must not give, nor he receive above 5 *s.* *per* Ounce for Silver; I may pay him 5 *s.* and present him with 4 *d.* or 6 *d.* more; I may give him Goods in barter, at such, or greater profit; and so by other contrivances, *ad Infinitum*.

But put case it took effect, and by that means all the Silver in *England* were coyned into Money; What then? would any one spend more in Cloaths, Equipages, Housekeeping, &c. then is done? I believe not; but rather the contrary: For the Gentry and Commonalty being nipt in their delight of seeing Plate, &c. in their Houses, would in all probability be dampt in all other Expences: Wherefore if this could be done, as I affirm it cannot, yet instead of procuring the desired effect, it would bring on all the Mischiefs of a sumptuary Law.

Whenever the Money is made lighter, or baser in allay, (which is the same thing) the effect is, that immediately the price of Bullion answers. So that in reality you change the Name, but not the thing: and whatever the difference is, the Tenant and Debtor hath it in his favor; for Rent and Debts will be paid less, by just so much as the intrinsick value is less, then what was to be paid before.

For example: One who before received for Rent or Debt, 3 *l.* 2 *s.* could with it buy twelve Ounces, or a Pound of Sterling Silver; but if the Crown-piece be worse in value than now it is, by 3 *d.* I do averr, you shall not be able to buy a Pound of such Silver under 3 *l.* 5 *s.* but either directly, or indirectly it shall cost so much.

But then it is said, we will buy an Ounce for 5 *s.* because 'tis the Price set by the Parliament, and no body shall dare to sell for more. I answer, If they cannot sell it for more, they may coyn it; And then what Fool will sell an Ounce of Silver for 5 *s.* when he may coyn it into 5 *s.* 5 *d.*?

Thus we may labour to hedge in the Cuckow, but in vain; for no People ever yet grew rich by Policies; but it is Peace, Industry, and Freedom that brings Trade and Wealth, and nothing else.



## *The Fable of the Bees*

1723

BERNARD MANDEVILLE was born in Holland in 1670 into a family of physicians and naval officers. He received his degree of Doctor of Medicine at Leiden in 1691 and began to practice as a specialist in nerve and stomach disorders, his father's specialty. Perhaps after a tour of Europe, he ended up in London, where he soon learned the language and decided to stay. He married in 1699, fathered at least two children, and brought out his first English publication in 1703 (a book of fables in the La Fontaine tradition). He wrote works on medicine (*A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions*, 1711), poetry (*Wishes to a Godson, with Other Miscellany Poems*, 1712), and religious and political affairs (*Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and National Happiness*, 1720). He died in 1733.

His most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, from which the present poem is taken, came out in more than half a dozen editions beginning in 1705 and became one of the most enduringly controversial works of the eighteenth century for its claims about the moral foundations of modern commercial society. The edition used here is *The Fable of the Bees*, edited by F. B. Kaye (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924; reprint, Liberty Fund, 1988), pp. 17–38. All notes but one brief bracketed addition are from the Kaye edition.

[1]

THE  
GRUMBLING HIVE:  
OR,  
KNAVES *turn'd Honest.*

A Spacious Hive well stockt with Bees,  
That liv'd in Luxury and Ease;  
And yet as fam'd for Laws and Arms,  
As yielding large and early Swarms;  
Was counted the great Nursery  
Of Sciences and Industry.  
No Bees had better Government,  
More Fickleness, or less Content:  
They were not Slaves to Tyranny,  
Nor rul'd by wild *Democracy*;  
[2] But Kings, that could not wrong, because  
Their Power was circumscrib'd by Laws.

THESE Insects liv'd like Men, and all  
Our Actions they perform'd in small:  
They did whatever's done in Town,  
And what belongs to Sword or Gown:  
Tho' th' Artful Works, by nimble Slight  
Of minute Limbs, 'scap'd Human Sight;  
Yet we've no Engines, Labourers,  
Ships, Castles, Arms, Artificers,  
Craft, Science, Shop, or Instrument,  
But they had an Equivalent:  
Which, since their Language is unknown,  
Must be call'd, as we do our own.  
As grant, that among other Things,  
They wanted Dice, yet they had Kings;  
And those had Guards; from whence we may

Justly conclude, they had some Play;  
Unless a Regiment be shewn  
Of Soldiers, that make use of none.

VAST Numbers throng'd the fruitful Hive; [3]  
Yet those vast Numbers made 'em thrive;  
Millions endeavouring to supply  
Each other's Lust and Vanity;  
While other Millions were employ'd,  
To see their Handy-works destroy'd;  
They furnish'd half the Universe;  
Yet had more Work than Labourers.  
Some with vast Stocks, and little Pains,  
Jump'd into Business of great Gains;  
And some were damn'd to Sythes and Spades,  
And all those hard laborious Trades;  
Where willing Wretches daily sweat,  
And wear out Strength and Limbs to eat:  
(A.) While others follow'd Mysteries,  
To which few Folks bind 'Prentices;  
That want no Stock, but that of Brass,  
And may set up without a Cross;<sup>1</sup>  
As Sharpers, Parasites, Pimps, Players,  
Pick-pockets, Coiners, Quacks, South-sayers,<sup>2</sup>  
And all those, that in Enmity, [4]

1. Without money. A cross was a small coin.

2. Cf. Butler's posthumous *Upon the Weakness and Misery of Man*:

... bawds, whores, and usurers,  
Pimps, scriv'ners, silenc'd ministers,  
That get estates by being undone  
For tender conscience, and have none,  
Like those that with their credit drive  
A trade, without a stock, and thrive. . . .

Had Mandeville perhaps seen a MS. of Butler's poem (published 1759)? The poem, incidentally, stated,

Our holiest actions have been  
Th' effects of wickedness and sin . . .

With downright Working, cunningly  
 Convert to their own Use the Labour  
 Of their good-natur'd heedless Neighbour.  
 (B.) These were call'd Knaves, but bar the Name,  
 The grave Industrious were the same:  
 All Trades and Places knew some Cheat,  
 No Calling was without Deceit.

THE Lawyers, of whose Art the Basis  
 Was raising Feuds and splitting Cases,  
 Oppos'd all Registers, that Cheats  
 Might make more Work with dipt Estates;<sup>3</sup>  
 As wer't unlawful, that one's own,  
 Without a Law-Suit, should be known.  
 They kept off Hearings wilfully,  
 To finger the refreshing Fee;  
 And to defend a wicked Cause,  
 Examin'd and survey'd the Laws,  
 As Burglars Shops and Houses do,  
 To find out where they'd best break through.

[5] PHYSICIANS valu'd Fame and Wealth  
 Above the drooping Patient's Health,  
 Or their own Skill: The greatest Part  
 Study'd, instead of Rules of Art,  
 Grave pensive Looks and dull Behaviour,  
 To gain th' Apothecary's Favour;  
 The Praise of Midwives, Priests, and all  
 That serv'd at Birth or Funeral.  
 To bear with th' ever-talking Tribe,  
 And hear my Lady's Aunt prescribe;  
 With formal Smile, and kind How d'ye,  
 To fawn on all the Family;

3. Mortgaged estates.

And, which of all the greatest Curse is,  
T' endure th' Impertinence of Nurses.

AMONG the many Priests of *Jove*,  
Hir'd to draw Blessings from Above,  
Some few were Learn'd and Eloquent,  
But thousands Hot and Ignorant:  
Yet all pass'd Muster that could hide  
Their Sloth, Lust, Avarice and Pride;  
For which they were as fam'd as Tailors  
For Cabbage, or for Brandy Sailors:  
Some, meagre-look'd, and meanly clad,  
Would mystically pray for Bread,  
Meaning by that an ample Store,  
Yet lit'rally received no more;  
And, while these holy Drudges starv'd,  
The lazy Ones, for which they serv'd,  
Indulg'd their Ease, with all the Graces  
Of Health and Plenty in their Faces.

[6]

(C.) THE Soldiers, that were forc'd to fight,  
If they surviv'd, got Honour by't;  
Tho' some, that shunn'd the bloody Fray,  
Had Limbs shot off, that ran away:  
Some valiant Gen'als fought the Foe;  
Others took Bribes to let them go:  
Some ventur'd always where 'twas warm,  
Lost now a Leg, and then an Arm;  
Till quite disabled, and put by,  
They liv'd on half their Salary;  
While others never came in Play,  
And staid at Home for double Pay.

[7]

THEIR Kings were serv'd, but Knavishly,  
Cheated by their own Ministry;

Many, that for their Welfare slaved,  
 Robbing the very Crown they saved:  
 Pensions were small, and they liv'd high,  
 Yet boasted of their Honesty.  
 Calling, whene'er they strain'd their Right,  
 The slipp'ry Trick a Perquisite;  
 And when Folks understood their Cant,  
 They chang'd that for Emolument;  
 Unwilling to be short or plain,  
 In any thing concerning Gain;  
 (D.) For there was not a Bee but would  
 Get more, I won't say, than he should;  
 But than he dar'd to let them know,  
 (E.) That pay'd for't; as your Gamesters do,  
 That, tho' at fair Play, ne'er will own  
 Before the Losers what they've won.

[8] BUT who can all their Frauds repeat?  
 The very Stuff, which in the Street  
 They sold for Dirt t'enrich the Ground,  
 Was often by the Buyers found  
 Sophisticated with a quarter  
 Of good-for-nothing Stones and Mortar;  
 Tho' *Flail* had little Cause to mutter,  
 Who sold the other Salt for Butter.

JUSTICE her self, fam'd for fair Dealing,  
 By Blindness had not lost her Feeling;  
 Her Left Hand, which the Scales should hold,  
 Had often dropt 'em, brib'd with Gold;  
 And, tho' she seem'd Impartial,  
 Where Punishment was corporal,  
 Pretended to a reg'lar Course,  
 In Murther, and all Crimes of Force;  
 Tho' some, first pillory'd for Cheating,  
 Were hang'd in Hemp of their own beating;

Yet, it was thought, the Sword she bore  
 Check'd but the Desp'rate and the Poor;  
 That, urg'd by meer Necessity, [9]  
 Were ty'd up to the wretched Tree<sup>4</sup>  
 For Crimes, which not deserv'd that Fate,  
 But to secure the Rich and Great.

THUS every Part was full of Vice,  
 Yet the whole Mass a Paradise;  
 Flatter'd in Peace, and fear'd in Wars,  
 They were th' Esteem of Foreigners,  
 And lavish of their Wealth and Lives,  
 The Balance of all other Hives.  
 Such were the Blessings of that State;  
 Their Crimes conspir'd to make them Great:  
 (F) And Virtue, who from Politicks  
 Had learn'd a Thousand Cunning Tricks,  
 Was, by their happy Influence,  
 Made Friends with Vice: And ever since,  
 (G.) The worst of all the Multitude  
 Did something for the Common Good.

THIS was the State's Craft, that maintain'd [10]  
 The Whole of which each Part complain'd:  
 This, as in Musick Harmony,  
 Made Jarrings in the main agree;  
 (H.) Parties directly opposite,  
 Assist each other, as 'twere for Spight;  
 And Temp'rance with Sobriety,  
 Serve Drunkenness and Gluttony.

(I.) THE Root of Evil, Avarice,  
 That damn'd ill-natur'd baneful Vice,  
 Was Slave to Prodigality,

4. Cf. Livy i. 26: "infelici arbori reste suspendito"; also Cicero, *Pro C. Rabirio* iv. 13.



(K.) That noble Sin; (L.) whilst Luxury  
 Employ'd a Million of the Poor,  
 (M.) And odious Pride a Million more:  
 (N.) Envy it self, and Vanity,  
 Were Ministers of Industry;  
 Their darling Folly, Fickleness,  
 In Diet, Furniture and Dress,  
 That strange ridic'lous Vice, was made  
 The very Wheel that turn'd the Trade.  
 [11] Their Laws and Clothes were equally  
 Objects of Mutability;  
 For, what was well done for a time,  
 In half a Year became a Crime;  
 Yet while they alter'd thus their Laws,  
 Still finding and correcting Flaws,  
 They mended by Inconstancy  
 Faults, which no Prudence could foresee.

THUS Vice nurs'd Ingenuity,  
 Which join'd with Time and Industry,  
 Had carry'd Life's Conveniencies,  
 (O.) It's real Pleasures, Comforts, Ease,  
 (P.) To such a Height, the very Poor  
 Liv'd better than the Rich before,<sup>5</sup>  
 And nothing could be added more.

How Vain is Mortal Happiness!  
 Had they but known the Bounds of Bliss;  
 And that Perfection here below  
 Is more than Gods can well bestow;

5. Of these lines and their elaboration in Remark P, I note two anticipations (not necessarily sources): "... a king of a large and fruitful territory there [America] feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day-labourer in England" (Locke, *Of Civil Government* II. v. 41); and "... a King of *India* is not so well lodg'd, and fed, and cloath'd, as a Day-labourer of *England*" (*Considerations on the East-India Trade*, in *Select Collection of Early English Tracts on Commerce*, ed. Political Economy Club, 1856, p. 594).

The Grumbling Brutes had been content [12]  
 With Ministers and Government.  
 But they, at every ill Success,  
 Like Creatures lost without Redress,  
 Curs'd Politicians, Armies, Fleets;  
 While every one cry'd, *Damn the Cheats*,  
 And would, tho' conscious of his own,  
 In others barb'rously bear none.

ONE, that had got a Princely Store,  
 By cheating Master, King and Poor,  
 Dar'd cry aloud, *The Land must sink*  
*For all its Fraud*; And whom d'ye think  
 The Sermonizing Rascal chid?  
 A Glover that sold Lamb for Kid.

THE least thing was not done amiss,  
 Or cross'd the Publick Business;  
 But all the Rogues cry'd brazenly,  
*Good Gods, Had we but Honesty!*  
*Merc'ry* smil'd at th' Impudence, [13]  
 And others call'd it want of Sense,  
 Always to rail at what they lov'd:  
 But *Jove* with Indignation mov'd,  
 At last in Anger swore, *He'd rid*  
*The bawling Hive of Fraud*; and did.  
 The very Moment it departs,  
 And Honesty fills all their Hearts;  
 There shews 'em, like th' Instructive Tree,  
 Those Crimes which they're asham'd to see;  
 Which now in Silence they confess,  
 By blushing at their Ugliness:  
 Like Children, that would hide their Faults,  
 And by their Colour own their Thoughts:  
 Imag'ning, when they're look'd upon,  
 That others see what they have done.

BUT, Oh ye Gods! What Consternation,  
 How vast and sudden was th' Alteration!  
 In half an Hour, the Nation round,  
 Meat fell a Penny in the Pound.  
 [14] The Mask Hypocrisy's flung down,  
 From the great Statesman to the Clown:  
 And some in borrow'd Looks well known,  
 Appear'd like Strangers in their own.  
 The Bar was silent from that Day;  
 For now the willing Debtors pay,  
 Ev'n what's by Creditors forgot;  
 Who quitted them that had it not.  
 Those, that were in the Wrong, stood mute,  
 And dropt the patch'd vexatious Suit:  
 On which since nothing less can thrive,  
 Than Lawyers in an honest Hive,  
 All, except those that got enough,  
 With Inkhorns by their sides troop'd off.

JUSTICE hang'd some, set others free;  
 And after Goal delivery,  
 Her Presence being no more requir'd,  
 With all her Train and Pomp retir'd.  
 First march'd some Smiths with Locks and Grates,  
 Fetters, and Doors with Iron Plates:  
 [15] Next Goalers, Turnkeys and Assistants:  
 Before the Goddess, at some distance,  
 Her chief and faithful Minister,  
 'Squire CATCH,<sup>6</sup> the Law's great Finisher,  
 Bore not th' imaginary Sword,<sup>7</sup>

6. "Jack Ketch" had become a generic term for executioners.

7. Probably the sword of justice, although a note in the French translation explains it differently (ed. 1750, i. 21): "On ne se sert dans les executions en *Angleterre* que de la hache pour trancher la tête, jamais de l'Epée. C'est pour cela qu'il donne le nom d'imaginaire à cette Epée qu'on attribue au Bourreau."

But his own Tools, an Ax and Cord:  
Then on a Cloud the Hood-wink'd Fair,  
JUSTICE her self was push'd by Air:  
About her Chariot, and behind,  
Were Serjeants, Bums<sup>8</sup> of every kind,  
Tip-staffs, and all those Officers,  
That squeeze a Living out of Tears.

THO' Physick liv'd, while Folks were ill,  
None would prescribe, but Bees of skill,  
Which through the Hive dispers'd so wide,  
That none of them had need to ride;  
Wav'd vain Disputes, and strove to free  
The Patients of their Misery;  
Left Drugs in cheating Countries grown,  
And us'd the Product of their own;  
Knowing the Gods sent no Disease  
To Nations without Remedies.

[16]

THEIR Clergy rous'd from Laziness,  
Laid not their Charge on Journey-Bees;<sup>9</sup>  
But serv'd themselves, exempt from Vice,  
The Gods with Pray'r and Sacrifice;  
All those, that were unfit, or knew  
Their Service might be spar'd, withdrew:  
Nor was there Business for so many,  
(If th' Honest stand in need of any,)  
Few only with the High-Priest staid,  
To whom the rest Obedience paid:  
Himself employ'd in Holy Cares,  
Resign'd to others State-Affairs.  
He chas'd no Starv'ling from his Door,  
Nor pinch'd the Wages of the Poor;

8. Bumbailiffs. [I.e., a bailiff employed in arrests.]

9. "Journeyman parson" was a slang term for a curate.

But at his House the Hungry's fed,  
 The Hireling finds unmeasur'd Bread,  
 The needy Trav'ler Board and Bed.

[17]        AMONG the King's great Ministers,  
 And all th' inferior Officers  
 The Change was great; (*Q.*) for frugally  
 They now liv'd on their Salary:  
 That a poor Bee should ten times come  
 To ask his Due, a trifling Sum,  
 And by some well-hir'd Clerk be made  
 To give a Crown, or ne'er be paid,  
 Would now be call'd a downright Cheat,  
 Tho' formerly a Perquisite.  
 All Places manag'd first by Three,  
 Who watch'd each other's Knavery,  
 And often for a Fellow-feeling,  
 Promoted one another's stealing,  
 Are happily supply'd by One,  
 By which some thousands more are gone.

(*R*) No Honour now could be content,  
 To live and owe for what was spent;  
 Liv'ries in Brokers Shops are hung,  
 They part with Coaches for a Song;  
 [18]        Sell stately Horses by whole Sets;  
 And Country-Houses, to pay Debts.

VAIN Cost is shunn'd as much as Fraud;  
 They have no Forces kept Abroad;  
 Laugh at th' Esteem of Foreigners,  
 And empty Glory got by Wars;  
 They fight, but for their Country's sake,  
 When Right or Liberty's at Stake.

Now mind the glorious Hive, and see  
 How Honesty and Trade agree.

The Shew is gone, it thins apace;  
 And looks with quite another Face.  
 For 'twas not only that They went,  
 By whom vast Sums were Yearly spent;  
 But Multitudes that liv'd on them,  
 Were daily forc'd to do the same.  
 In vain to other Trades they'd fly;  
 All were o'er-stock'd accordingly.

THE Price of Land and Houses falls; [19]  
 Mirac'lous Palaces, whose Walls,  
 Like those of *Thebes*, were rais'd by Play,<sup>10</sup>  
 Are to be let; while the once gay,  
 Well-seated Houshold Gods would be  
 More pleas'd to expire in Flames, than see  
 The mean Inscription on the Door  
 Smile at the lofty ones they bore.  
 The building Trade is quite destroy'd,  
 Artificers are not employ'd;  
 (S.) No Limner for his Art is fam'd,  
 Stone-cutters, Carvers are not nam'd.

THOSE, that remain'd, grown temp'rate, strive,  
 Not how to spend, but how to live,  
 And, when they paid their Tavern Score,  
 Resolv'd to enter it no more:  
 No Vintner's Jilt in all the Hive  
 Could wear now Cloth of Gold, and thrive;  
 Nor *Torcol* such vast Sums advance,  
 For *Burgundy* and *Ortelans*;  
 The Courtier's gone, that with his Miss [20]

10. A footnote in the French translation (ed. 1750, i. 27) says: "L'Auteur veut parler des bâtimens élevés pour l'Opera & la Comédie. *Amphion*, après avoir chassé *Cadmus* & sa *Femme* du lieu de leur demeure, y bâtit la Ville de *Thèbes*, en y attirant les pierres avec ordre & mesure, par l'harmonie merveilleuse de son divin Luth." It is possible, however, that Mandeville intended a pun on "Play" as meaning both music and gambling.

Supp'd at his House on *Christmas* Peas;  
 Spending as much in two Hours stay,  
 As keeps a Troop of Horse a Day.

THE haughty *Chloe*, to live Great,  
 Had made her (*T.*) Husband rob the State:  
 But now she sells her Furniture,  
 Which th' *Indies* had been ransack'd for;  
 Contracts th' expensive Bill of Fare,  
 And wears her strong Suit a whole Year:  
 The slight and fickle Age is past;  
 And Clothes, as well as Fashions, last.  
 Weavers, that join'd rich Silk with Plate,  
 And all the Trades subordinate,  
 Are gone. Still Peace and Plenty reign,  
 And every Thing is cheap, tho' plain:  
 Kind Nature, free from Gard'ners Force,  
 Allows all Fruits in her own Course;  
 But Rarities cannot be had,  
 Where Pains to get them are not paid.

[21] As Pride and Luxury decrease,  
 So by degrees they leave the Seas.  
 Not Merchants now, but Companies  
 Remove whole Manufactories.  
 All Arts and Crafts neglected lie;  
 (*I.*) Content, the Bane of Industry,<sup>11</sup>  
 Makes 'em admire their homely Store,  
 And neither seek nor covet more.

11. Compare Locke's reflection: "When a man is perfectly content with the state he is in—which is when he is perfectly without any uneasiness—what industry, what action, what will is there left, but to continue in it? . . . And thus we see our all-wise Maker, suitably to our constitution and frame, and knowing what it is that determines the will, has put into man the uneasiness of hunger and thirst, and other natural desires, that return at their seasons, to move and determine their wills, for the preservation of themselves, and the continuation of their species" (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Fraser, 1894, II. xxi. 34).

So few in the vast Hive remain,  
The hundredth Part they can't maintain  
Against th' Insults of numerous Foes;  
Whom yet they valiantly oppose:  
'Till some well-fenc'd Retreat is found,  
And here they die or stand their Ground.  
No Hireling in their Army's known;  
But bravely fighting for their own,  
Their Courage and Integrity  
At last were crown'd with Victory.  
They triumph'd not without their Cost,  
For many Thousand Bees were lost.  
Hard'ned with Toils and Exercise, [22]  
They counted Ease it self a Vice;  
Which so improv'd their Temperance;  
That, to avoid Extravagance,  
They flew into a hollow Tree,  
Blest with Content and Honesty.

### The Moral [23]

Then leave Complaints: Fools only strive  
(X.) To make a Great an Honest Hive  
(Y.) T' enjoy the World's Conveniencies,  
Be fam'd in War, yet live in Ease,  
Without great Vices, is a vain  
EUTOPIA seated in the Brain.  
Fraud, Luxury and Pride must live,  
While we the Benefits receive:  
Hunger's a dreadful Plague, no doubt,  
Yet who digests or thrives without?  
Do we not owe the Growth of Wine  
To the dry shabby crooked Vine?  
Which, while its Shoots neglected stood,  
Chok'd other Plants, and ran to Wood;  
But blest us with its noble Fruit,



[24] As soon as it was ty'd and cut:  
So Vice is beneficial found,  
When it's by Justice lopt and bound;  
Nay, where the People would be great,  
As necessary to the State,  
As Hunger is to make 'em eat.  
Bare Virtue can't make Nations live  
In Splendor; they, that would revive  
A Golden Age, must be as free,  
For Acorns, as for Honesty.



*An Enquiry Whether a General  
Practice of Virtue Tends to the  
Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or  
Disadvantage of a People*

1725

GEORGE BLEWHITT (or Bluett) is thought to be the author of the work anthologized here, though even that is not certain, and in any case not much is known about him. The book was perhaps the most sophisticated of the many polemical responses to the 1723 edition of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. The work was divided into seven sections, including sections on topics such as dueling, prostitution, and charity schools, on all of which subjects Mandeville had written specifically.

The excerpt reprinted here is taken from *An Enquiry Whether a General Practice of Virtue Tends to the Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or Disadvantage of a People* (London: R. Wilkin, 1725). I reproduce the preface and section I. Unbracketed notes are by the author; bracketed notes and material are by the present editor.

## An Enquiry Whether a General Practice of VIRTUE Tends to the WEALTH or POVERTY, BENEFIT or DISADVANTAGE of *a People*?

*In which the Pleas offered by the Author of the Fable of the Bees, or private Vices publick Benefits, for the Usefulness of VICE and ROGUERY are considered.*

*With some Thoughts concerning a Toleration of PUBLICK STEWS.*

*Hoc, de quo nunc agimus, id ipsum est, quod UTILE appellatur: in quo lapsa Consuetudo deflexit de via sensimque eo deducta est, ut honestatem ab utilitate secernens, & constitueret honestum esse aliquid, quod utile non esset; & utile quod non honestum; qua nulla perniciēs major hominum vitae potuit afferri. Tull. de Offic. L. 2. 3.<sup>1</sup>*

I would willingly ask in what Vice is profitable to *The Whole*? Not surely in Respect of heavenly Things, and such as are Divine by Nature: For it would be ridiculous [to say,] that were there not amongst Men, Malice, and Covetousness, and Lying, or that if we did not rob, plunder, slander and murder one another, the Sun would not run his appointed Course, nor the World enjoy its Seasons. It remains then that the Existence of Vice must be profitable for us and our Affairs,—[But] are we the more healthy for being vicious, or do we more abound with Necessaries? Or does Vice contribute anything to our Beauty and Strength? *Plutarch, of common Notions against the Stoicks.* Eng. Trans. [of *De Communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos.*] London 1704.

—What Difference is there between such Triflers and Ravers, and

1. [Now the subject I am to treat of is neither more nor less than what we call expediency; in which matter custom has so declined and gradually deviated from the right path, that, separating virtue from expediency, it has determined that some things may be virtue which are not expediency, and some expediency which are not virtue; than which doctrine nothing more pernicious can be introduced into human life. *Cicero's Three Books of Offices*, trans. Cyrus R. Edmonds (London: Bohn, 1853).]

those who say, that Intemperance was not brought forth unprofitably for Contenance, nor Injustice for Justice? That so we may pray to the Gods, there may be always Wickedness: *Ibid.*

## The Preface

The first Part of this Enquiry was drawn up at the Request of a Friend, who intended to write a general Discourse of the Grounds of Morality; and in that to consider the different Systems laid down in *the Fable of the Bees* and the *Characteristicks*.<sup>2</sup> To shew in Opposition to the one, that the shocking Image the Author has drawn of Mankind, and the moral Virtues they have hitherto thought it their Perfection to practise, was monstrous and unnatural; and in answer to the other, that neither is *Man* of so refined a Frame, or intended to be so, as to practise Virtue merely for its own Sake, or, if she were represented in a human Shape (as *Plato* said of Wisdom) immediately to fall in love with her, and that to so romantick a Degree, as to obey her severest Precepts, merely for the Pleasure of surveying the Beauty of her Person: In short, to prove (what it seems the Perverseness of some among us make it necessary should be proved) that *Men* in themselves are neither *Seraphims* nor *Devils*.

In the doing this, he proposed to consider the Objections the Author of *the Fable of the Bees* had urged against the Practice of Virtue: And finding that the most popular one was the Disadvantage it is pretended the Publick would lye under from the Loss of that Variety of Employments which now depend upon Vice and Roguery, what he designed by this Request to his Friend, was to see in a plain and distinct View, in what manner Trade and Employments would really be affected by a strict and general Practice of moral Duties. Upon perusal of that Paper, the Gentleman was pleased to disengage himself from so much of his Design as related to *the Fable of the Bees*, and lay the Burthen of it upon one much inferior to himself in those Abilities that must have recommended such a Treatise to the Favour of the Publick.

2. [Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), *Characteristicks of men, manners, opinions, times* (London, 1699, 1711, 1714).]

This Paper is now swelled to almost the Compass of a Book. But the Reader must not expect from hence a particular Answer to every thing that deserves Censure in *the Fable of the Bees*. The most tolerable Part of his Performance is a *borrowed* Satyr upon the *Follies* and *Vices* of Mankind, which the Author either mistakes himself, or is pleased to put upon the World for a Description of *human Nature*, and an Essay upon the Passions. There are other Passages so very low and indecent, that common Modesty will scarce allow an Answer to them. Among others to this Purpose let the Reader turn to p. 118,<sup>3</sup> where he is ridiculing the idle and extravagant Fears that ignorant and unexperienced People have upon them, from the Word *Enervate*. But for this I leave him to the Correction of his Brother *Anodyne*, and hope he will do him Justice in the next Edition of one of his late Pieces.

Such as his Book is, he says it has found its Patrons. But whether they are *Persons* either of the greatest *Probity* and *Virtue*, or the most *unquestionable good Sense*,<sup>4</sup> the Reader will be apt to guess from the Judgment he shall form of the Book itself in both these Respects; when he sees of what kind the Principles are which are recommended in it, and in how consistent a manner they are defended.

But whatever Notion the World may entertain of this Gentleman's Abilities, it ought to be allowed that they are well enough proportioned to the Task he has undertaken. There needs no great Wit, and much less Logick, to recommend the Practice of Vice. Treatises of Impiety will subsist, and find Applause from their own intrinsick Value, without the Gloss of good Sense to set them off. What Occasion is there for any exact Talent of reasoning to convince young Fellows, that in the midst of their Debauchery they are promoting the *publick Good*? That the Magistrate neglects his Duty to them in not providing better for their Pleasures, by tolerating a sufficient Number of Temples of *Venus*, where without the Trouble and Pains of employing People to bawd<sup>5</sup> for them, they may constantly offer up their Devotions? That if ever through a general

3. [Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), Remark (L.), 1:118. Bracketed references to Mandeville in this essay refer to the Kaye edition.]

4. P. 467. [1:405.]

5. [procure]

Practice of Virtue, or the want of good Government, they should fall under so great a Misfortune as to find a Scarcity of *English* Whores, it is the proper Business of the Magistrate to look out and *procure* a sufficient Number from foreign Parts? The Pupils such Lectures are designed for, carry Inclinations about with them, that will easily excuse the want of a good reasoning Head in their Tutor.

To those who are thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of *Trade*, and the real Source of a national Wealth, a great deal less would have been sufficient to shew the Mischiefs of Vice in general, and of Luxury in particular. But for the sake of others I have been forced to follow him thro' a tedious Repetition of the same thing in different Views.

The Account of his Opinions relating to the first Formation of Society, and the Origin of moral Virtues, is given with no other Design than to prevent the Tediousness which a separate Answer to all the Absurdities he has fallen into would occasion. Indeed such an Answer is the less necessary after what has been writ with so much Spirit and good Sense upon this Subject already.<sup>6</sup>

It is a Saying of the Duke of *Roche-foucault*, "That as wicked as Men are, they never dare to profess themselves Enemies to Virtue; and when they have a Mind to persecute it, they either pretend not to think it real, or forge some Faults and lay to its Charge."<sup>7</sup> A Character, which if the noble *Frenchman* drew for himself, is done with more Judgment than any thing in his Book. But perhaps the same Principle of SELF-LOVE, he had with so much Sagacity spied out in all the rest of Mankind, had shut his Eyes against this lively Representation of himself.

It is not impossible however but this might be laid down as a Model for the Observation of those who should write in the same Cause after him, and to point out just how far it was proper for them to go in their Attacks upon Virtue. This Model Mr. *Esprit*<sup>8</sup> has followed very closely, and so, in the main, has the Author of *the Fable of the Bees*: But by leaving out sometimes the Restrictions their Notions were guarded with, or

6. Mr. *Law*'s Remarks. [William Law, *Remarks upon a late Book, Entitled, the Fable of the Bees* (1724).]

7. No. 556. Paris Edit. 1692.

8. *La fausseté des Vertus humaines* [Paris, 1678].

inserting others of his own, which rather expose than extenuate the Guilt of them, upon the whole, he has much outdone the Original. It is not only that most things are *not* Virtue, which the World take for such, but the Thing itself, we are told, is ridiculous in Theory, and mischievous in Practice.

As to what relates to Charity Schools, I have not presumed to give Notice in the Title Page that I have said any thing in Defence of them. Those Gentlemen who are the greatest Admirers of *the Fable of the Bees*, would hardly vouchsafe to look into a Book, which they found could treat of so ungraceful a Subject, as the Teaching poor Children to read, giving them Cloaths, and binding them Apprentices.

## Section I

The different Parts of the Earth being endued with different Properties, and producing different Fruits for the Use of Mankind; and Men being naturally form'd with different Talents and Dispositions, and acquiring different Sorts of Skill in the Improvement of these; the Conveniency of Trade was found out as soon as there were any People in the World. Trade is nothing but an Exchange of Commodities, that is, of the Fruits of the Earth, either natural, or improv'd by Skill and Labour. Now Reason and Observation immediately taught them, that tho' no one Part of the Earth produced the Fruits of the whole, yet by Exchanging the Superfluities of one Sort, for what they wanted of others, the Defect might in a good Measure be supply'd. Trade therefore is a Contrivance to extend (as much as possible) the particular Benefits that any one Person or one People enjoys, to all People; and in effect to make each Portion of the Earth produce what the whole Earth produces. But these Advantages were soon carried further than bare Necessity pointed out to them. They found that less than all the Product of the Earth, and less than all their Labour would supply them with Necessaries and Conveniencies, and therefore naturally thought of adding to them the Elegancies or Ornaments of Life. From hence it will appear,

First, That the Wealth of a Country consists in a Soil that produces the greatest Plenty of the Necessaries, Conveniencies and Ornaments of

Living, or in the Returns of them by Trade. In order to enjoy which Advantages, the Community must have Hands enough to make the most of the natural Fruits of their Soil, to improve them by Skill and Labour, to secure Men in the Possession of them when they are obtain'd (with the Assistance of a mild Government) to exchange Commodities with one another, to furnish Foreigners with that Share of them that is not wanted at home, and to import in Exchange for them such of their Commodities as are wanted.

But Secondly, in forming a Comparison between the Wealth of one Country and that of another, we need only consider the Plenty of Ornaments there is in each; for the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life are common to almost all People alike; it being absurd to say that a People should subsist without Necessaries, and very unlikely that any Community of Men should pitch upon so small or so barren a Portion of the Earth for their Residence, as by the Help of their Labour would not supply them with all the Conveniencies of Life. In this View therefore the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life should not be consider'd as a Part of National Wealth any otherwise than as a Superfluity of them will procure Ornaments in return for them from those Countries, where 'tis their Interest either to neglect their own Soil, or to work up the Product of it for foreign Trade, rather than Home Consumption. What is common then to all Countries alike being thrown out of the Account, publick Wealth may be said to consist in the greatest Plenty of Ornaments.

These Advantages, the Author of *The Fable of the Bees* thinks no Society can enjoy, where there is a General Practice of Virtue. The Substance of what he says to this Purpose, is this:

“Since a Number of Men are employ'd and maintain'd by securing others in the Enjoyment of their Wealth or Property, which can only happen upon a Supposition of Wrong and Violence, all these must be left without Employment where there's an Universal Honesty. Therefore the Loss of this Labour is a Loss of Wealth to the Community, and the Maintenance of that vast Number of idle Hands, an unsupportable Charge and Burthen.”

To judge of the Weight of this Objection, it must be consider'd, whether what is laid down in the first Position, be a true Account of National Wealth; whether it consists only in the Fruits of the Soil improv'd



by Skill and Labour, and the Returns of them by Trade. If the Affirmative be true, 'tis necessary only there should be Hands enough to make the most of these Advantages, that is, to manure the Earth for the better and more plentiful Production of its Fruits, to draw forth and gather these Fruits, to improve them by Skill and Labour, and to exchange the Superfluities of them for such other Commodities as are wanted. By the Help of these Hands then, the Society will be as rich as *it can be*, and no sort of Labour that does not contribute to one of those Purposes, can add *at all* to their Wealth. For as to these Employments that are concern'd in the Security of Property, tho' they are necessary while Vice and Roguery subsist, yet they add no new Wealth to the Community; they only continue what is already got to the proper Owners. And as the Security of Possessions so gain'd gives Encouragement to Industry in the gaining them, 'tis upon that Account only that such Hands are instrumental in the Acquisition of National Wealth. But as these very Possessions would be much better secur'd by an Universal Honesty, so such an Honesty would be a much greater Encouragement to Industry, and consequently in a greater Degree contribute to the National Wealth. But this is carrying the Benefit of Universal Honesty further than is necessary in Answer to the Objection. 'Tis sufficient, at present, if it appears, that an entire Absence of Roguery, by which 'tis pretended so many Hands would be left idle, could not at all take off from the National Wealth.

It will be ask'd in Consequence of the second Part of the Argument, how these Men left without Employment can be maintained?

It has been prov'd already, that this Change in their Morals would not lessen the Wealth or Property of a People, and consequently there would be the *same* Fund of Provisions for the Maintenance of the *same* Number of People. We will allow then that such as are thus deprived of their Employments, have a Right to a Maintenance some way or other, and that the Society is under an Obligation to employ them, or (what comes to the same Thing), to maintain them unemployed.

It must be consider'd, that as every Man is oblig'd to be at some Expence, in fencing himself and his Property against Violence and Wrong, so this Expence would be entirely saved by a General Practice of Virtue; and the Savings of this Expence throughout the Community would be a Fund for the Maintenance of such as by this Means are grown useless.

This every one would chearfully contribute to the Payment of, on account of the compleat Security he has of enjoying the Remainder without Fear or Hazard.

Indeed in the present Situation of Affairs Idleness has a Tendency to Vice; but the Objection supposes an entire Absence of Vice. The Question here is not whether *Idleness* promotes *Vice*, but whether *Virtue* begets *Poverty*. It will be the same thing therefore to the Community, whether these Hands are employ'd in useless Labour, or maintain'd unemployed; for bare Employment is of no Use to the Publick, nor is it possible it should be.

I have known an Overseer of the Poor in the Country, when a lusty Fellow has complain'd to him of his want of Work, employ him for a whole Day together in turning a Grindstone, tho' nothing was all that while ground upon it. I believe it won't be said that the Parish was the richer for the Fellow's Labour; or that they might not as cheaply have paid him for sitting at home, or observing the Shapes of the Clouds. The Overseer however judg'd right; the Fellow grew asham'd of so senseless a Task, and soon found out a better Employment himself.

That somewhat like this would be the Case of the whole Community, is the next thing we shall endeavour to prove; that is, that all or great Numbers of those we have hitherto supposed would be useless from the want of their present Employment in providing against Roguery, would find other Employments: And as all the Skill and Labour exercis'd in these, would be just so much Addition to the publick Wealth; so it must be put to the Account of this Universal Honesty, that is, it will be a Proof that such Universal Honesty not only does not occasion any *Poverty*, but would greatly encrease a National *Wealth*.

In the first Place, there never was yet that Country in the World, where every Part of the Soil was so compleatly improv'd as not to be capable of much further Improvement. This of it self would employ vast Numbers, and all such further Improvement of the Soil would be an additional Wealth.

2dly, If Wealth consists in a Plenty of Ornaments, whatever adds to these is an Addition to Wealth. Now the Skill and Labour that might be employ'd in the Improvement of Commodities, or in adding to the Elegancies of Life, is almost infinite. The Arts of Painting, Carving,

Gilding, &c. might take up the Time, and supply Labour to all such as are now employ'd in Bolts, Locks and Fences. Such as are employ'd in teaching others their Duty, or pleading for their Rights, would, by their superior Skill and Understanding, be the Men of Wealth, and live in Elegance and Grandeur themselves, or in some Condition or other, contribute to those Advantages in their Neighbours.

There could be no Want of Employment then, supposing this great Change to be ever so sudden, and that a Miracle intervened to effect it at once. But this is setting the present Question in a very improper Light. When this is apply'd to Practice, and address'd to the Magistrate,<sup>9</sup> as a Rule to direct him in the Government of a Society, the Change must necessarily be supposed to be *gradual*; and then it will appear still plainer that there would necessarily arise a Succession of new Trades, or a greater Number of the present Trades that contribute to the ornamental Parts of Life, in Proportion as the Trades in providing against Roguery grew useless and wore off.

All the Consequences of an Universal Honesty will best appear from the following Case.

Suppose a Man possess'd of a large Flock of Sheep, who is oblig'd to be at a great Expence in making his Fences very strong, and in maintaining a Number of Shepherds to preserve them against the Wolves that abound in his Neighbourhood. Afterwards by the Care and Skill of the Government, or the Assistance of his Neighbours, the Wolves are all destroyed. Would the Countryman complain that by this Means his Servants were left without Employment? Or if he should, would not he be told, that his Expence, and not his Income, was lessen'd? Or if he was still oblig'd to maintain the *same* Servants, that they would contribute to his Profit by an Improvement of other Parts of his Farm; or if there was no Room for that, to his Conveniency and Grandeur, by adorning his House and Gardens; or by a better Attendance upon himself and Family? The worst that could happen from their Want of Employment being only that some of his Shepherds would be turned into Footmen, and

9. In *Answer to the Presentment of the Grand Jury*, he says, The Matter complain'd of (the Fable of the Bees) is manifestly address'd to Magistrates and Politicians, p. 469 ["A Vindication of the Book," 1:406]. N.B. *The last Edition is all along refer'd to.*

wait at their Master's Table, instead of watching his Flocks. In short, 'till his Acres grew fewer, or his Crops less plentiful, no one ill Consequence could follow from the Change.

Rogues and Plunderers are the *Wolves* of humane Society; and that People, as well as private Family, would be the most happy and wealthy, where the Employment for Fence-makers, Guards and Watchmen, and the *Occasion* for them were entirely at an End.

If it be objected that such a Morality would destroy a Part of Foreign Trade, because such as are now employed in building, exporting, &c. Ships of War, Ammunitions and other warlike Stores, which are occasion'd by Injustice and Oppression, would then have nothing to do; I answer, that warlike Stores, &c. being the Fences against the Plunder of other Societies, as Bolts, Locks and Barrs are against the Robberies of private Men, if such a Morality is suppos'd to be confin'd to one Nation, other Countries will still have Occasion for those Commodities; but supposing it Universal, their Commerce in the Ornaments of Life would be the greater, as their Demand for Provisions against those Mischiefs grew less.

To illustrate yet further, what has hitherto been said by another Instance that comes likewise within the Author's Scheme.<sup>10</sup>

Put the Case that by another Miracle the Use of Physick were to cease (as most of it, the learned Author thinks, would cease with common Roguery,<sup>11</sup> whilst a good Part of the Remainder would be left to subsist upon Folly); suppose all People were to enjoy a perfect State of Health 'till they died (for Sickness is a natural Evil, as Roguery is a moral one). Would any one scruple to pay Physicians as much to sit still, as he pays them at present for Advice and Physick, in Consideration of such a Blessing? Or wou'd the Publick suffer by their Idleness, or that of the Tradesmen dependant upon them? If the Evils themselves cease at the same Time that the Provisions against them are remov'd, 'tis impossible

10. P. 428. Evil moral as well as natural, is the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments, without Exception. [The passage in the 1732 edition reads, "what we call Evil in this world, moral as well as natural, is the grand Principle that makes us sociable Creatures, the solid Basis, the Life and support of all Trades & Employments without exception." "A Search into the Nature of Society," 1:369.]

11. P. 5, & 15. [1:20–21, 29.]

any Loss or Inconvenience shou'd happen from the Alteration. If the Want of Employment be in it self a Grievance, let it be remembred, that tho' the universal Medicine would be worth very little, yet a large Field of Labour would still remain behind in squaring the Circle, finding out the Philosopher's Stone, or a perpetual Motion.

In the Instance now mention'd, 'tis certain, that a small Part of our Foreign, as well as Inland Trade, would be destroy'd. 'Twill be the same Thing in any more considerable Branch. As there would be no Occasion for the Importation of Drugs, it will be ask'd how that Quantity of our Goods, which is now exported in Exchange for them, can be dispos'd of? To suppose then the worst that could *possibly* happen, and that there is no other Vent for them, let there be as much Skill and Labour employ'd in working them up as there is now, and when they are ready for Exportation, either let them be destroy'd here, or shipped off immediately, and thrown over Board. *Goods burnt and sunk* [says the Author, in favour of Storms, Shipwrecks, &c.<sup>12</sup>] *are as beneficial to the Poor, as if they had safely arrived at their several Ports*; which then will appear more demonstrably true in the present Case, as the Substance of the Exporter or Employer of the Poor is not lessen'd by such an Accident. It will be ask'd, Who then shall pay for the Materials and Workmanship of them? The Property of those People whose Want of Drugs or Physick ceases, is increas'd by this means; or, which is the same Thing, their necessary Expences are lessen'd. These People wou'd think the Blessing of Health cheaply purchas'd at so small a Price; or as the Case is general, let the Publick pay it, and raise it upon the People in what Proportion they please. 'Tis plain, the whole Community would be as able to pay it as they are *now*, since no Part of their Wealth is lessen'd by the Change. Their natural Soil would be the same, while more Hands might be employ'd in making the utmost Advantages of it.

It would be too tedious to pursue this Observation thro' the several Branches of Trade that are now employ'd in providing against Vice and Roguery; but I believe enough has been said to convince the intelligent Reader, that the same Way of Reasoning will hold good universally in other Instances.

12. P. 421. [1:363–64.]

The Author makes Sickness, and such other *natural Evils*, a Part of the *solid Basis, the Life and Support of Trades and Employments*,<sup>13</sup> as much as *Moral* ones. In the same Manner the Inundations and Incroachments of the Sea, that some Countries are particularly liable to, are publick Benefits in that Country, as much as the Plunder and Incroachment of Rogues and Villains; for as many Hands may be employ'd in providing against those Natural Evils, as against Moral ones. What a vast Expence are the *Dutch* at every Year, in repairing their Dikes? Now according to him, a Project for saving this Expence ought to be lookt upon as a Plot against the Wealth and Safety of their Country, as it would certainly deprive a vast Number of Men of their present Employment. But if a rational feasible Project for this Purpose should meet with such a Reception, *the wise Rulers of that well-order'd Commonwealth*<sup>14</sup> would, in the Opinion of some People, forfeit a Share of their Reputation for good Policy. Suppose yet further, that such Hands were depriv'd of their present Employment ever so suddenly, that Providence shou'd in one Night's time raise Barriers against the Sea, that were to last as long as the World it self, in all Probability, these *wise Rulers* would not consider such a Miracle as a National Misfortune, but would find out ways enough to employ those Hands who now work in their Dikes, especially when, as the Author tells you, in some of their Provinces there's *Abundance of Ground lying waste* for want of Improvement.<sup>15</sup>

This Absurdity runs thro' his Book. *Evil moral as well as natural is the solid Basis, &c.* Not only all sorts of Vice and Roguery, *but the Necessities and Imperfections of Man, the various Inclemencies of Air and other Elements, the Treachery of Water, the Rage of Fire, the Sterility of the Earth, Sickness and Disasters of all sorts; in short, all such Evils as the World call Misfortunes, come into his Account of Publick Benefits. The Gifts of Munificence of Heaven, and all the Bounties and Benefits of Nature, by saving a World of Labour and Pains, make us poor.* But the *Inclemencies of Air and other Elements, Badness of Seasons, the Stubbornness and Sterility of the Earth, are the great Source of Trades, and consequently of Wealth: They*

13. P. 428. ["A Search," 1:369.]

14. P. 95. [Remark (H.), 1:96, where "City" appears instead of "Commonwealth."]

15. P. 205. [Remark (Q.), 1:188.]

rack our Invention, and so make us *rich*. The Loss of Limbs are vastly useful to a Society, or else there could have been no room for the Invention of wooden Legs, or the Practice of Surgery. If all People had their Sight in Perfection, the World had never had the Benefit of the curious Workmanship of Glass-eyes; and I take it upon me to prove, that if none were to walk upon their Feet, there would be more Stilts and Crutches in the Nation than there are now: And *the greater Variety there is of Wants, the larger Number of Individuals may find their private Interest* in supplying them.<sup>16</sup> The finding out the Longitude, for Instance, is one of the most impertinent mischievous Attempts that has hitherto employ'd the Care or Skill of Mankind. Instead of offering Rewards for it, every good Subject ought to beseech Providence to blast any traiterous Endeavours towards it, and to avert so heavy a Calamity as the Prevention of Shipwrecks would bring upon us. If the Reader would see more of the same Strain of Politicks, let him read from Page 414 to 428, particularly 424 and 425, and the Vindication of them at the End.<sup>17</sup>

Upon the Whole, a People in the Circumstances *the Author* has represented his reform'd Hive,<sup>18</sup> that is, without any Vice or Roguery among them, would be wealthier than otherwise, as enjoying at least as many of the Necessaries and Conveniencies, and more of the Ornaments of Life; or in other Words, their Income would be at least as much, and their necessary Expences less. Whatever Complaints he may think fit to make, that Smiths, &c.<sup>19</sup> would starve, if there were no Roguery going forward, every Man would contribute to maintain those Engineers, not only in Idleness, but in Plenty and Affluence, provided he could be secure from the least Apprehension of Violence and Wrong of any kind; at least every Man *would*, that did not hope to thrive upon a general Plunder, to make himself Amends for the Injuries he received from some, by his greater Oppression of others. Besides, nothing can be so great an Encouragement to Industry, which is the Life of Trade, as *a Security*, that what a Man gets can never be wrested from him.

16. P. 465. ["A Vindication," 1:403.]

17. See likewise the Index under the Word Blessings, *the Place refer'd to (it seems) is to prove Blessings prejudicial*.

18. P. 13. [1:27.]

19. P. 82. [1:86.]

This Security is the chief End of Government; and if that particular Form of Government is the best calculated to promote the Trade and Wealth of a Country, and that People are the most happy, where the Properties of private Men are not liable to the Encroachments of arbitrary Rulers: *That* Form of Government, which could effectually secure Men from the Injustice and Wrongs of one another, should, one would think, be still more perfect. For the Tyranny of a Prince affects People in a more remote Degree than Robbery, Violence and Plunder among themselves. By such Practices they are thrown back into a State of Nature, which is much worse than a very bad Government. A Prince would do his People less Mischief if he oppress'd them *himself*; and prevented their oppressing *one another*, than if, by an indolent Behaviour and Remissness of Government (tho' he refrain'd from all Violence himself) he allow'd every Man to injure his Neighbour as he pleased. And yet a Statesman, who could fix this happy Model of Government, according to him, ought to be deemed an arrant Traitor to his Country, by rendring so many Smiths and Watchmen useless. The Author must not think to explain away the Badness or Absurdity of his Opinions, by saying, that such a Form of Government is *impossible*; that *to live*

*Without great Vices, is a vain  
Eutopia seated in the Brain;*

an Excuse he seems to be laying in for in the *Moral*, as he calls it.<sup>20</sup> For wherever the Scheme was first *seated*, 'tis at present in *the Fable of the Bees*. He supposes *the Fact*, and then undertakes to shew you the Mischiefs of it. 'Tis only to disguise his main Design, that he employs his ingenious Raillery in ridiculing *Fools*, who *only strive*

*To make a great an honest Hive,*

that is, for endeavouring at what is *impossible* to obtain. His real Sentiments appear, when he calls *the grumbling Hive* Rogues and Fools, for having by their impertinent Prayers procur'd *in Fact* such a State and Condition, and consequently such Ruin and Poverty. The *Knaves* are

20. P. 23. [1:36.]



actually *turned honest*,<sup>21</sup> a Curse which the great and good Gods sent them in their Vengeance as the greatest they could inflict,

—*All the Rogues cry'd brazenly,  
Good Gods, had we but Honesty!  
Merc'ry smil'd at the Impudence,  
And others call'd it Want of Sense;*

(tho' by the way, *Mercury* acts a little out of Character here; he might with a better Grace have laugh'd at their want of Sense, than their want of Modesty or Honesty, Qualities he was not very remarkable for himself) *but Jove mov'd with Indignation, at last swore in Anger*,<sup>22</sup>

—He'd rid  
The bawling Hive of Fraud; AND DID.  
*The very Moment it departs,  
And Honesty fills all their Hearts.*

The Bees themselves immediately grew sensible of their *ugly* Transformation from Knavery to Honesty,

—*In Silence they confess,  
By blushing at their Ugliness.*

Then comes the dreadful Account of Ruin and Desolation this Monster Honesty brought with it;

*But, oh you Gods! What Consternation,  
How vast and sudden was th' Alteration!  
In half an Hour the Nation round  
Meat fell a penny in the Pound, &c.*<sup>23</sup>

Till at last, finding themselves poor,

—*To avoid Extravagance  
They flew into a hollow Tree,  
Blest with Content and Honesty.*<sup>24</sup>

21. The Title of the Fable itself is *The Grumbling Hive, or, Knaves turn'd honest*.

22. P. 13. ["The Grumbling Hive," 1:27; see above, p. 211.]

23. P. 13. [1:28; see above, p. 212.]

24. P. 22. [1:35; see above, p. 217.]

As this is an Excuse which the Author has very often Recourse to, I shall be oblig'd to take notice of it again in the Course of this Enquiry.

If what has been said be a true Account of national Wealth; if it consists wholly in the Product of the Soil improv'd by Skill and Labour, and the Returns of it by Trade, it will help us to discover another Mistake that some among us have run into; which is, that all Inventions to save Labour and Trouble, by the Help of which one Man may do the same Work in one Day, that would otherwise employ several Men for several Days, are prejudicial to the Publick. For whatever Labour is employ'd for other Purposes than the drawing out, improving, &c. the Product of the Soil, is utterly useless to the Publick; and consequently, if by the Help of new Inventions any piece of Work that now requires *two* Men, can be done in the same Time by *one* Man, all that Labour so sav'd would be so much real Gain to the Publick, as long as there is any room for the further Improvement of their Soil, or beautifying the Product of it, or extending their Commerce.

Tho' such an Universal Morality, as has been all along suppos'd, be impossible in Fact, without the Intervention of a *Miracle* (which one would wonder *the Author of the Fable* should have Recourse to for the Foundation of his Scheme) yet what has been said will hold equally true as to any less Improvement in Virtue, that the Care and Skill of the Magistrate can bring about; and 'tis in this *practical* View only that his Notions are of any Consequence to the World, or deserve to be consider'd.

It will be hard to guess, what Design *the Author* could have in publishing this System of Politicks. Has there been such a quick and sudden Progress in Morality of late Years here in *England*, as to occasion the starving great Numbers of People who were before employ'd in fencing against Roguery? For he tells you *ENGLAND* is the Country his *Hive* is intended to represent.<sup>25</sup> There are a great many thousand Acres of incultivated Land, which, at the Expence of Labour, would bring a large Accession of Wealth to the Kingdom; many Rivers might be made navigable, neglected Branches of Trade encourag'd to publick Advantage; and our publick Roads be kept in a much better Order. These are but a few

25. Preface, p. 4. ["Preface," 1:6, where it is implied but not stated that England is the subject.]

Instances that might be named, wherein the Labour of many thousands, according to his own Assertion,<sup>26</sup> might be usefully employed.

Tho' the Magistrate were to set about the Work of Reformation ever so heartily, I am afraid the Progress he could make, would not be so great as to enable him to make Draughts from such as are now employed in defending us against Roguery, large enough to supply these great Occasions; even tho' no new Trades were to arise, nor the Number of the present ones to encrease, that make for the ornamental Parts of Life, to afford Labour for such as would grow useless by a general Practice of Honesty. And yet till all this happens, and the Society is found to groan under the Weight and Misery of Virtue, one would think there should be no Occasion for such Lessons of Immorality. Has there been any insolent Attempt set on Foot to abridge Mankind of their natural Liberty of practising Vice and Wickedness, or to make Virtue and Religion fashionable among us? Can he, among the numberless Projects that have of late Years been offer'd for the Good of this Nation; tell us of any Schemes calculated to make the present or the future Age more honest or virtuous than former ones? I can think of but one, out of a great many that might be named to the contrary, I mean that of *Charity-Schools*: And 'tis greatly to the Honour of the Persons concerned in promoting these Seminaries of Virtue, that the same Book which attempts to prove *the more wicked and vicious Mankind are*, the better Subjects they are, *and the more useful Members of a Commonwealth*, should have in it a Treatise against those Charities. The Author might very well have changed Titles, and have called *the Fable* it self *an Argument against Charity-Schools*. For if *private Vices* are *publick Benefits*, 'tis a much better Argument against them, than any he has urged. But this will be considered more at large hereafter.

His Comparison of Wickedness in a Society to the Dirt of the Streets in *London*,<sup>27</sup> is nothing to his Purpose. The only way of reasoning that will hold here, is to say, that as the Wealth and Trade of the City of *London* produce some *Dirt* in the Streets, so will the Wealth of the Society

26. P. 364. There is above three or four hundred Years Work for a hundred thousand Poor, more than we have in this Island. [1:318.]

27. See the *Preface* from p. 9. to p. 11. and p. 471. ["Preface," 1:10–11, and "A Vindication," 1:408.]

*produce* some *Vice* and Wickedness in the People; which (if it proves any thing) is not an Argument for the *Usefulness* of *Vice*, but rather shews the *Inconvenience* of *Wealth*. To say, as the Dirt of the Streets is the *Effect* of the Wealth of the City, so Vice or Wickedness is the *Cause* of the Wealth of a Society, is a sort of Logick peculiar to himself.

This Comparison then is against him. For as a Project for the better cleansing the Streets would not, I presume, be lookt upon by the Inhabitants, as a Plot against the Trade and Wealth of the City: So the Extirpation of Vice in a Society would as little tend to the lessening the publick Wealth or Happiness; even tho' each could be so effectual, as that *the Blackguard and the Scavengers* in the *one* Case,<sup>28</sup> and Smiths<sup>29</sup> and Watchmen in the *other*, should be oblig'd to quit their present Employments, and the Expence of both be entirely saved.

But the Author thinks, however it might fare with lesser Communities, that *no Society can be raised into a rich and mighty Kingdom, or so raised subsist in their Wealth or Power for any considerable Time, without the Vices of Man*.<sup>30</sup> Now this Distinction he himself has effectually destroyed elsewhere. For if *what we call Evil in this World*, (the Expression looks as if he differ'd from the rest of the World in his Opinion of it) *moral as well as natural, is the grand Principle that makes us sociable Creatures, the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments without Exception, that the Moment Evil ceases, the Society must be spoiled, if not totally dissolved*,<sup>31</sup> it will follow, that Evil is essential to the *Being* of Society, to lesser ones as well as greater. But to consider his Argument as it stands here.

As to the First Part of it, it will be readily allowed him, that History furnishes very few Instances of any wide Extent of Dominion, that was not *at first* procur'd by Methods very inconsistent with Virtue and Morality. The Conduct of an *Alexander* at the Head of his Army can as little be justified, as that of *Cartouche* and his Gang.<sup>32</sup> But then the

28. Preface, p. 11. ["Preface," 1:12.]

29. P. 82. [Remark (G.), 1:86.]

30. P. 225.

31. P. 428. ["A Search," 1:369.]

32. [Louis-Dominique Cartouche (1693–1721), a famous bandit. See note 36 of ch. 23 in this volume.]

utmost he can make of his Argument, will be this, that a Man cannot raise so large an Estate by being content with his own, as if he plunder'd his Neighbours, and had sufficient Power to back him in his Outrage, and that such Plunder can't happen without the Assistance of Vice and Roguery. In short, that it is impossible to be a mighty Robber, without being somewhat dishonest; a Discovery in which *Hamlet* has been beforehand with him.<sup>33</sup>

If he could have prov'd indeed that no body was the *poorer* for this *plunder'd Wealth*, it would have been a Secret worth communicating to the World; a Secret of great Use to justify the Conduct of Ministers of State.

But with regard to whole Societies he has yet a much harder Task. For besides the proving that no other Prince is the poorer for these plunder'd Territories, he must shew, before he can make the least Use of it, that a wide Extent of Dominion is necessary to the Wealth and Happiness of the People. And as to that, it must be consider'd, that the Happiness of a Community, is nothing but the Happiness of the private Individuals who compose it. To say, that a Community may be happy, where the private Individuals are unhappy, is to say, that an Army may be well cloathed, though every single Man in every Regiment were forc'd to go naked. 'Tis highly absurd to call a Nation happy and flourishing, only because it makes a Figure abroad, and is a Terrour to its Neighbours. For the greatest Power and Force that ever any Nation has possess'd, either to defend themselves, or to offend their Neighbours, has been of no real Use, but as they tended to make each Individual happy in his *private* Life, by securing to him the free and quiet Enjoyment of his own. If we are to judge by this Test, of the Use that new Acquisitions of Territories are to a Society, they will be far from serving the Purposes of the Author. Are private Men the more happy or the more wealthy, because their Sovereign has the Glory to be a Conqueror? It is not the Grandeur of the Prince, that makes the People happy; nor the Extent of his Dominions, that makes them rich. New Provinces may be bought or added every Year, and yet the Estates of private Men be not at all enlarg'd by it. If one Part of a Prince's Dominions grow the richer for any Addition to them,

33. *There's ne'er a Villain dwelling in all Denmark, but he's an arrant Knave.* Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. [Act 1, scene 5, l. 127–28.]

it can only happen by draining the Wealth from other Parts. All Ages and Countries will afford Examples enough of this Truth. But to avoid giving Offence, I would choose to put the Reader in Mind of what has happen'd elsewhere, rather than of what *Englishmen* may be suppos'd to be more immediately concern'd in.

But when a mighty Kingdom is so raised, it is by no means true, that it can't subsist in its Wealth or Power, without the Assistance of *Vice*. I expect it will be said that Power must be supported by the Methods 'twas procured; but besides that this has no relation to *private* Vices, (no more indeed has the whole Objection) it can only be true as to the first *Conquerors themselves*, and will cease afterwards, when a long Possession, and a continued Submission to the Successors, have repair'd the want of Justice in the Title of the *Conqueror*. This, 'tis probable, has been the Case some time or other of every Kingdom in the World. When this Right is once acquir'd, Virtue and Morality don't exact a tame Submission to Injuries and Invasions from abroad, nor stand in the way to any publick Benefit or Happiness at home. Enough has been said to prove the Truth of the one already; and as to the *other*, Courage and a Love of Liberty have never yet been reckon'd among the Number of Vices.<sup>34</sup>

34. See p. 21. of the *Fable from these Words*, So few in the vast Hive, &c. ["Grumbling Hive," 1:35. See above, p. 217].



## *The Complete English Tradesman*

1727

DANIEL DEFOE, a butcher's son, was born into a nonconformist family in London, probably in 1660 or 1661. He pursued but then abandoned the training for a dissenting minister. Instead, he went into business around 1685, becoming a liveryman in 1687–88. He participated in Monmouth's rebellion in 1685 and served in William's army in 1688. He became a hose factor in London, in which capacity he engaged in trade in France and Spain. He was not frugal in his expenses, however, and went bankrupt in 1697. He was a government accountant in the late 1690s. In the 1690s, he wrote numerous reform proposals on subjects such as a national bank, savings banks, and insurance. He changed his name from Foe to Defoe around 1703. By the time he was imprisoned in 1703 for "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters," a satire in favor of religious toleration, he had a wife and six children.

He wrote political works and served as a secret commissioner to Scotland for the government in the first decade of the 1700s. He was an anti-Jacobite pamphleteer in 1713 but was prosecuted by the Whigs for treasonable writings the same year; he was convicted of libel but freed by the efforts of Townsend, the secretary of state. He was the editor of the Jacobite *Mist's Journal*, 1717–24. His main works then proceeded in short order: *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719, *Moll Flanders* in 1722, and *Roxanna* in 1724. His *Journal of the Plague Year* came out in 1722, and *New Voyage Around the World* appeared in 1725. He also was the author of a large number of essays, pamphlets, travel pieces, and other works, in-

cluding many that described the new commercial society that was emerging in England in his time, such as the influential *Plan of English Commerce*. He wrote more than 250 publications, and he died in 1731. Swift called him a “stupid illiterate scribbler.”

Originally written in 1727, the work included here is from *The Complete English Tradesman* in *The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe*, edited by Sir Walter Scott (Oxford: Talboys, 1841), volume 17, chapter 25, pp. 241–53. The notes are by the present editor.



## The Complete English Tradesman

*Of the dignity of trade in England, more than in other countries. That England is the greatest trading country in the world; that our climate is the best to live in; that our men are the stoutest and best; that the tradesmen in England are not of the meanest of the people; that the wealth of the nation lies chiefly among them; that trade is a continual fund for supplying the decays in the rank of gentry; that an ordinary trader can spend more than a gentleman of 500l. a year; that an estate is a pond, but trade a spring; that the descendants of tradesmen here, for gallantry of spirit and greatness of soul, are not inferior to the descendants of the best families. Further hints to the ladies whose pride will not let them stoop to marry a tradesman. To trade, and not to conquest, is owing the present grandeur of the English nation. How much the landed interest owes to trade.*

The instances which we have given in the last chapter, abundantly make for the honour of the British traders; and we may venture to say, at the same time, are very far from doing dishonour to the nobility who have from time to time entered into alliance with them; for it is very well known, that besides the benefit which we reap by being a trading nation, which is our principal glory, trade is a very different thing in England than it is in many other countries, and is carried on by persons



who, both in their education and descent, are far from being the dregs of the people.

King Charles II., who was perhaps the prince of all the kings that ever reigned in England, who best understood the country and the people he governed, used to say, that the tradesmen were the only gentry in England. His majesty spoke it merrily, but it had a happy signification in it, such as was peculiar to the bright genius of that prince, who, though he was not the best governor, was the best acquainted with the world of all the princes of his age, if not of all the men in it; and I make no scruple to advance these three points in honour of our country; viz.—

1. That we are the greatest trading country in the world, because we have the greatest exportation of the growth and product of our land, and of the manufacture and labour of our people; and the greatest importation and consumption of the growth, product, and manufactures of other countries from abroad, of any nation in the world.

2. That our climate is the best and most agreeable to live in, because a man can be more out of doors in England than in other countries.

3. That our men are the stoutest and best, because, strip them naked from the waist upwards, and give them no weapons at all but their hands and heels, and turn them into a room or stage, and lock them in with the like number of other men of any nation, man for man, and they shall beat the best men you shall find in the world.

As so many of our noble and wealthy families, as we have shown, are raised by and derived from trade, so it is true, and indeed it cannot well be otherwise, that many of the younger branches of our gentry, and even of the nobility itself, have descended again into the spring from whence they flowed, and have become tradesmen; and thence it is that, as I said above, our tradesmen in England are not, as it generally is in other countries, always of the meanest of our people. Nor is trade itself in England, as it generally is in other countries, the meanest thing the men can turn their hand to; but, on the contrary, trade is the readiest way for men to raise their fortunes and families; and therefore it is a field for men of figure and of good families to enter upon.

N. B. By trade we must be understood to include navigation and foreign discoveries; because they are, generally speaking, all promoted and car-

ried on by trade, and even by tradesmen, as well as merchants; and the tradesmen, as owners, are at this time as much concerned in shipping as the merchants, only the latter may be said to be the chief employers of the shipping.

Having thus done a particular piece of justice to ourselves, in the value we put upon trade and tradesmen in England, it reflects very much upon the understandings of those refined heads who pretend to depreciate that part of the nation which is so infinitely superior in wealth to the families who call themselves gentry, and so infinitely more numerous.

As to the wealth of the nation, that undoubtedly lies chiefly among the trading part of the people; and though there are a great many families raised within few years, in the late war,<sup>1</sup> by great employments and by great actions abroad, to the honour of the English gentry, yet how many more families among the tradesmen have been raised to immense estates, even during the same time, by the attending circumstances of the war; such as the clothing, the paying, the victualling and furnishing, &c., both army and navy. And by whom have the prodigious taxes been paid, the loans supplied, and money advanced upon all occasions? By whom are the banks and companies carried on, and on whom are the customs and excises levied? Have not the trade and tradesmen borne the burden of the war? And do they not still pay four millions a year interest for the public debts. On whom are the funds levied, and by whom the public credit supported? Is not trade the inexhausted fund of all funds, and upon which all the rest depend?

As is the trade, so in proportion are the tradesmen; and how wealthy are tradesmen in almost all the several parts of England, as well as in London? How common is it to see a tradesman go off the stage, even but from mere shopkeeping, with from ten to forty thousand pounds' estate to divide among his family! when, on the contrary, take the gentry in England, from one end to the other, except a few here and there, what with excessive high living, which is of late grown so much into a disease, and the other ordinary circumstances of families, we find few families of the lower gentry, that is to say from six or seven hundred a year down-

1. [The War of the Spanish Succession, 1701-14.]

wards, but they are in debt, and in necessitous circumstances, and a great many of greater estates also.

On the other hand, let any one who is acquainted with England, look but abroad into the several counties, especially near London, or within fifty miles of it; how are the ancient families worn out by time and family misfortunes, and the estates possessed by a new race of tradesmen, grown up into families of gentry, and established by the immense wealth gained, as I may say, behind the counter; that is, in the shop, the warehouse, and the counting-house.

How many noble seats, superior to the palaces of sovereign princes, in some countries, do we see erected within few miles of this city by tradesmen, or the sons of tradesmen, while the seats and castles of the ancient gentry, like their families, look worn out and fallen into decay! witness the noble house of sir John Eyles, himself a merchant, at Giddyhall, near Romford; sir Gregory Page, on Blackheath, the son of a brewer; sir Nathanael Mead, near Weal-green, his father a linendraper, with many others, too long to repeat; and, to crown all, the lord Castlemain's, now earl of Tilney, at Wanstead, his father, sir Josiah Child, originally a tradesman.

Again; in how superior a port or figure (as we now call it) do our tradesmen live, to what the middling gentry either do or can support! An ordinary tradesman now, not in the city only, but in the country, shall spend more money by the year, than a gentleman of four or five hundred pounds a year can do, and shall increase and lay up every year too; whereas the gentleman shall at the best stand stock still just where he began, nay, perhaps, decline: and as for the lower gentry, from a hundred pounds a year to three hundred, or thereabouts, though they are often as proud and high in their appearance as the other; as to them, I say, a shoemaker in London shall keep a better house, spend more money, clothe his family better, and yet grow rich too. It is evident where the difference lies; an estate's a pond, but trade's a spring: the first, if it keeps full, and the water wholesome, by the ordinary supplies and drains from the neighbouring grounds, it is well, and it is all that is expected; but the other is an inexhausted current, which not only fills the pond, and keeps it full, but is continually running over, and fills all the lower ponds and places about it.

This being the case in England, and our trade being so vastly great, it is no wonder that the tradesmen in England fills the lists of our nobility and gentry; no wonder that the gentlemen of the best families marry tradesmen's daughters, and put their younger sons apprentices to tradesmen; and how often do these younger sons come to buy the elder sons' estates, and restore the family, when the elder and head of the house, proving rakish and extravagant, has wasted his patrimony, and is obliged to make out the blessing of Israel's family, where the younger son bought the birthright, and the elder was doomed to serve him!

Trade is so far here from being inconsistent with a gentleman, that, in short, trade in England makes gentlemen, and has peopled this nation with gentlemen; for, after a generation or two, the tradesman's children, or at least their grandchildren, come to be as good gentlemen, statesmen, parliamentmen, privy-counsellors, judges, bishops, and noblemen, as those of the highest birth and the most ancient families; as we have shown. Nor do we find any defect either in the genius or capacities of the posterity of tradesmen, arising from any remains of mechanic blood, which, it is pretended, should influence them; but all the gallantry of spirit, greatness of soul, and all the generous principles that can be found in any of the ancient families, whose blood is the most untainted, as they call it, with the low mixtures of a mechanic race, are found in these; and, as is said before, they generally go beyond them in knowledge of the world, which is the best education.

We see the tradesmen of England, as they grow wealthy, coming every day to the herald's office to search for the coats of arms of their ancestors, in order to paint them upon their coaches, and engrave them upon their plate, embroider them upon their furniture, or carve them upon the pediments of their new houses; and how often do we see them trace the registers of their families up to the prime nobility, or the most ancient gentry of the kingdom!

In this search we find them often qualified to raise new families, if they do not descend from old; as was said of a certain tradesman of London, that if he could not find the ancient race of gentlemen, from which he came, he would begin a new race, who should be as good gentlemen as any that went before him.

Thus, in the late wars between England and France, how was our

army full of excellent officers, who went from the shop, and behind the counter, into the camp, and who distinguished themselves there by their merits and gallant behaviour! And several such came to command regiments, and even to be general officers, and to gain as much reputation in the service as any; as colonel Pierce, Wood, Richards, and several others that may be named.

All this confirms what I have said before, viz., that trade in England neither is or ought to be levelled with what it is in other countries; or the tradesman depreciated as they are abroad, and as some of our gentry would pretend to do in England; but that as many of our best families rose from trade, so many branches of the best families in England, under the nobility, have stooped so low as to be put apprentices to tradesmen in London, and to set up and follow those trades when they have come out of their times, and have thought it no dishonour to their blood.

To bring this once more home to the ladies, who are scandalized at that mean step, which they call it, of marrying a tradesman, it may be told them, for their humiliation, that, however they think fit to act, sometimes those tradesmen come of better families than their own; and oftentimes, when they have refused them to their loss, those very tradesmen have married ladies of superior fortune to them, and have raised families of their own, who, in one generation, have been superior to those nice ladies both in dignity and estate; and have, to their great mortification, been ranked above them upon all public occasions.

The word "tradesmen," in England, does not sound so harsh as it does in other countries; and to say a gentleman-tradesman, is not so much nonsense as some people would persuade us to reckon it; and, indeed, the very name of an English tradesman, will and does already obtain in the world; and as our soldiers, by the late war, gained the reputation of being some of the best troops in the world; and our seamen are at this day, and very justly too, esteemed the best sailors in the world; so the English tradesman may be allowed to rank with the best gentlemen in Europe; and, as the prophet Isaiah said of the merchants of Tyre, that *her traffickers were the honourable of the earth*, Isa. xxiii. 8.

And hence it is natural to ask, whence comes all this to be so? How is it produced? War has not done it; no, nor so much as helped or assisted to it; it is not by any martial exploits; we have made no conquests abroad,

added no new kingdoms to the British empire, reduced no neighbouring nations, or extended the possession of our monarchs into the properties of others; we have gained nothing by war and encroachment; we are butted and bounded just where we were in queen Elizabeth's time; the Dutch, the Flemings, the French, are in view of us, just as they were then; we have subjected no new provinces or people to our government; and, with few or no exceptions, we are almost, for dominion, where king Edward I. left us: nay, we have lost all the dominions which our ancient kings for some hundred of years held in France; such as the rich and powerful provinces of Normandy, Poictou, Gascoigne, Bretagne, and Aquitaine; and, instead of being enriched by war and victory, on the contrary, we have been torn in pieces by civil wars and rebellions, as well in Ireland as in England, and that several times, to the ruin of our richest families, and the slaughter of our nobility and gentry; nay, to the destruction even of monarchy itself, as in the long bloody wars between the houses of Lancaster and York,<sup>2</sup> the many rebellions of the Irish, as well in queen Elizabeth's time, as in king Charles I. time; and the fatal massacre, and almost extirpation of the English name in that kingdom; and, at last, the late rebellion in England, in which the monarch fell a sacrifice to the fury of the people, and monarchy itself gave way to tyranny and usurpation, for almost twenty years.<sup>3</sup>

These things prove abundantly that the greatness of the British nation is not owing to war and conquests, to enlarging its dominions by the sword, or subjecting the people of other countries to our power; but it is all owing to trade, to the increase of our commerce at home, and the extending it abroad.

It is owing to trade, that new discoveries have been made in lands unknown, and new settlements and plantations made, new colonies planted, and new governments formed, in the uninhabited islands, and the uncultivated continent of America; and those plantings and settlements have again enlarged and increased the trade, and thereby the wealth and power of the nation by whom they were discovered and planted; we have not increased our power, or the number of our subjects,

2. [The Wars of the Roses, 1455–85.]

3. [The English Civil War and Commonwealth, 1642–60.]

by subduing the nations which possess those countries, and incorporating them into our own; but have entirely planted our colonies, and peopled the countries with our own subjects, natives of this island; and, excepting the negroes, which we transport from Africa to America, as slaves to work in the sugar and tobacco plantations, all our colonies, as well in the islands, as on the continent of America, are entirely peopled from Great Britain and Ireland, and chiefly the former; the natives having either removed further up into the country, or, by their own folly and treachery raising war against us, been destroyed and cut off.

As trade has thus extended our colonies abroad, so it has (except those colonies) kept our people at home, where they are multiplied to that prodigious degree, and do still continue to multiply in such a manner, that, if it goes on so, time may come that all the lands in England will do little more than serve for gardens from them and to feed their cows, and their corn and cattle be supplied from Scotland and Ireland.

What is the reason that we see numbers of French, and of Scots, and Germans, in all the foreign nations in Europe, and especially filling up their armies and courts, and that you see few or no English there?

What is the reason that, when we want to raise armies, or to man navies, in England, we are obliged to press the seamen, and to make laws, and empower the justices of peace and magistrates of towns, to force men to go for soldiers, and enter into the service, or allure them by giving bounty-money as an encouragement to men to list themselves; whereas the people of other nations, and even the Scots and Irish, travel abroad and run into all the neighbour-nations, to seek service and to be admitted into their pay?

What is it but trade, the increase of business at home, and the employment of the poor in the business and manufactures of this kingdom, by which the poor get so good wages, and live so well, that they will not list for soldiers; and have so good pay in the merchants' service, that they will not serve on board the ships of war, unless they are forced to do it?

What is the reason that, in order to supply our colonies and plantations with people, besides the encouragement given in those colonies to all people that will come hither to plant and to settle, we are obliged to send away thither all our petty offenders, and all the criminals that we think fit to spare from the gallows, besides that we formerly called the

kidnapping trade, that is to say, the arts made use of to wheedle and draw away young, vagrant, and indigent people, and people of desperate fortunes, to sell themselves, that is, bind themselves for servants, the number of which are very great?

It is poverty fills armies, mans navies, and peoples colonies; in vain the drums beat for soldiers to serve in the armies for fivepence a day, and the king's captains invite seamen to serve in the royal navy for twenty-three shillings per month, in a country where the ordinary labourer can have nine shillings a week for his labour, and the manufacturers earn from twelve to sixteen shillings a week for their work; and while trade gives thirty shillings per month wages to the seamen on board merchant-ships, men will always stay or go, as the pay gives them encouragement; and this is the reason why it has been so much more difficult to raise and recruit armies in England, than it has been in Scotland and Ireland, France and Germany.

The same trade that keeps our people at home, is the cause of the well-living of the people here; for as frugality is not the national virtue of England, so the people that get much, spend much; and as they work hard, so they live well, eat and drink well, clothe warm, and lodge soft; in a word, the working manufacturing people of England, eat the fat, drink the sweet, live better, and fare better, than the working poor of any other nation in Europe; they make better wages of their work, and spend more of the money upon their backs and bellies than in any other country. This expense of the poor, as it causes a prodigious consumption both of the provisions and of the manufactures of our country at home, so two things are undeniably the consequence of that part.

1. The consumption of provisions increases the rent and value of the lands; and this raises the gentlemen's estates, and that again increases the employment of people, and consequently the numbers of them, as well those that are employed in the husbandry of land, breeding and feeding of cattle, &c., as of servants to the gentlemen's families, who as their estates increase in value, so they increase their families and equipages.

2. As the people get greater wages, so they, I mean the same poorer part of the people, clothe better, and furnish better; and this increases the consumption of the very manufactures they make; then that consumption increases the quantity made; and this creates what we call inland



trade, by which innumerable families are employed, and the increase of the people maintained; and by which increase of trade and people the present growing prosperity of this nation is produced.

The whole glory and greatness of England then being thus raised by trade, it must be unaccountable folly and ignorance in us to lessen that one article in our own esteem, which is the only fountain from whence we all, take us as a nation, are raised, and by which we are enriched and maintained. The Scripture says, speaking of the riches and glory of the city of Tyre, which was indeed at that time the great port or emporium of the world for foreign commerce, from whence all the silks and fine manufactures of Persia and India were exported all over the western world, *that her merchants were princes*, and in another place, *by thy traffic thou hast increased thy riches*, Ezek. xxviii. 5. Certain it is, that our traffic has increased our riches; and it is also certain, that the flourishing of our manufacture is the foundation of all our traffic, as well our merchandise as our inland trade.

The inland trade of England is a thing not easily described; it would, in a word, take up a whole book by itself; it is the foundation of our wealth and greatness; it is the support of all our foreign trade, and of our manufacturing; and as I have hitherto written of the tradesmen who carry it on, I shall proceed with a brief discourse of the trade itself.



*Plan for the Improvement of  
Commerce  
1732?*

CHARLES IRÉNÉE CASTEL, *abbé* de Saint-Pierre, was born into an old family in Normandy in 1658. After a Jesuit education, he entered holy orders. An early interest in the sciences led him to Paris, where he became well acquainted with many of the distinguished intellectuals of his time, including Nicole, Malebranche, Vertot, and Fontenelle, the latter of whom arranged for his selection to the Académie Française in 1695. He became a pensioner of the Duchess of Orléans in 1702. After attending the Treaty of Utrecht with the Cardinal of Polignac in 1712, he wrote and began to publish his *Projet de paix perpétuelle* in 1713 (described by Cardinal Dubois as “the dreams of a well-intentioned man”), the third volume of which came out in 1717 and was dedicated to the Duke of Orléans, then regent. His far-reaching attack on the reign of Louis XIV and scheme for constitutional reform, *Discours sur la polysynodie*, appeared in 1718. Though expelled unanimously by the Académie Française, he took refuge in the more receptive Club de l’Entresol, where he unleashed a continuing barrage of reform proposals during the existence of the Club, which was closed down by the prime minister Cardinal Fleury in 1731. Through the rest of his life, he lived either at his estate at Saint-Pierre-Eglise or at Chenonceaux, where Madame Dupin supported his ideas and where Rousseau regarded him sympathetically. Writings on the duel, on tax reform, on administrative reform, on poor relief, and on

educational improvement had earned him the sobriquet “Solicitor for the public good” by the time of his death in 1743.

The brief excerpt here is “Observation I: L’Augmentation du Comerce augmentera le travail & l’industrie de la Nation,” from *Projet pour perfectionner le Comerce*, in *Ouvrages de politique*, 17 vols. (Rotterdam: J. D. Beman, 1733–41), 8:182–85.



## Plan for the Improvement of Commerce

### Observation I

*The increase in trade will increase the work and industry of the Nation*

All work is tedious, and when man sees that his work brings him nothing, or not enough, he remains idle and refrains from useless effort.

But where work is lucrative, men are willing to work, and they work much. Now where there is much trade going on, the merchants pay handsomely for manufactures and for the fruits of the earth; for as they carry them elsewhere, they sell them at a much higher price than they buy them for.

Inhabitants of cold countries have more needs; they lack more things. They need more clothes, and they need more heat. The roads are harder to maintain because of the rain. They need more buildings to protect them against the cold and the rain. It is thus not surprising that they are more hard-working than the inhabitants of warm countries; work itself is more tedious in warm countries. Hence it is not surprising that people closest to the Equator should be the laziest and least hard-working, and as a result less industrious than those who live in climates further removed from the Equator.

Work has four advantages for a family.

1. It brings in riches and goods.

2. It makes pleasures more palpable, for they are all the more perceptible as the person who tastes them is emerging from a difficult situation.

3. Work makes ills less palpable, for those who are already used to some pain feel other small pains less acutely.

4. Work habituates us to rules, discipline, and the observance of justice. For in work, the mind gets used to more attention, and the hard-working man, who is painstaking and rich, is more inclined to dispense justice—so that justice is done to him—than the lazy man who has nothing to lose.

One may conclude from this that that people which is the hardest-working will be the wealthiest, the most just, the easiest to govern, and the happiest.

Where there is much commerce, not only are the people happier and more industrious, but the wealthy themselves are more hard-working than elsewhere; the wealthiest merchants are never without occupation.

When the wealthy are hard-working, they make fewer useless expenses; for nothing teaches them the value of riches better than the pains and care they take in gaining them.

To reduce idleness and luxury expenses is to diminish the maladies of a state. Almost all types of goods and manufactures are part of maritime trade, either as transported goods or as consumer goods. Now the merchants who earn more from a commodity buy it at a higher price, and this describes the maritime merchants.



*A Political Essay upon Commerce*

1734

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MELON was born in 1675 into a judicial family and became a lawyer attached to the Parlement of Bordeaux. He came to be associated with the literary elite of the city and suggested the establishment of a literary circle. Under the protection of the Duke of La Force, that circle became a formal provincial academy in September 1712, with Melon as its secretary. Melon worked for La Force during the Regency and subsequently with the Guardian of the Seal d'Argenson, as well as with Cardinal Dubois, John Law, and the Duke of Orléans, whom he served as secretary and general financial adviser. According to Voltaire, it was Melon who persuaded the regent to recall Law from Venice to direct the administration's finances. Melon died in Paris in 1738.

The excerpt here comes from his only historically important work, *Essai politique sur le commerce* (1734), which was refuted by Dutot but praised by Voltaire in the midst of the latter's polemic over the "Mondain" (see chapter 16). I have used *A Political Essay upon Commerce*, translated by David Bindon (Dublin: Crampton, 1738), ch. 9, pp. 173–99, and have retained one or two of the more piquantly relevant of the translator's footnotes. The other notes, which are bracketed, are my own.

# A Political Essay upon Commerce

## Of Luxury

We are now led to the Consideration of Luxury, and its Workmen. A Subject, which hath given Occasion to many wild Declamations, that have oftener proceeded, from an envious and morose Temper, than from the true Principles of Reason, or a wise Severity of Manners.

If Men were so happy, as to regulate their Actions, according to the pure Maxims of Religion, they would not have Occasion for Laws. Duty would serve, as a Curb to Vice, and an Incitement to Virtue. But, unhappily for us, we are swayed by our Passions, and the Legislat[or], should only endeavour, to turn them to the best Advantage of the Community. Ambition maketh military Men valiant, and Traders are excited to work, by the Desire of Gain. The Expectation of being in a Condition to enjoy an easy, voluptuous Life, often influenceth both the one, and the other: And Luxury becometh an additional Incitement with them, to follow their several Occupations.

Luxury, is an extraordinary Sumptuousness, proceeding from the Riches, and Security of a Government. It will be always found attendant, upon every well-governed Society. Whoever findeth himself possessed of great Plenty, will be desirous to enjoy it. He hath, for this Purpose, several Cravings, which Persons not so rich as he, are not able to pay for; and these Cravings are always relative to Time, and to Persons. What was Luxury in the Days of our Fathers, is now very Common; and what is Luxury among us, will not be so, to our Posterity. Silk Stockings, were Luxury in the Days of *Henry the Second*; and *Delft-Ware*, is as much so, when compared to common *Earthen-Ware*, as *China* is, when compared to *Delft-Ware*.

The Peasant findeth Luxury in the Habitation of the Villager [*bourgeois*]; the Villager in the House of the Inhabitant of his Neighbour Town; who, on his Part, looketh upon himself, as unpolite, with respect to the Inhabitant of the Capital City; and he is yet more unpolite, when compared to the Courtier.

The Legislat[or] may judge the same way of Luxury, as [he] doth of Colonies. When a State hath the Number of Men necessary for tilling the Land, for War, and for Manufactures, it is of Use, that the Surplus, should employ themselves in works of Luxury. Because, there remaineth only this Employment for them, or they must be Idle; and, that it is of greater Advantage, to keep the Inhabitants, in the Place, where the Sovereignty is to be maintained, when they can earn a Livelihood, than to send them to the Colonies, where they labour only to promote Luxury. Sugar, Silk, Coffee, Tobacco, are new Luxuries, not known to the *Romans*. A People of the greatest Luxury, if we may believe the Declaimers of their Times, who were as peevish and satyrical, in Verse and Prose, as those of our Days.

In what Sense can it be said, that Luxury rendereth a Nation effeminate? This cannot relate to the Army. The Soldiers, and Subaltern Officers, are Strangers to Luxury, and it is not through the Magnificence of general Officers, that an Army hath been defeated. Ambitious Emulation, supports them, no less than it doth others. Is the Weakness of those numerous *Ottoman* and *Persian* Armies, to be attributed to Luxury, or to want of Emulation, and Discipline? Eastern Luxury, is an indolent Laziness, which enervates Courage, in a wretched Seraglio.

The *Spanish* Troops, much worse clad and more frugal, than any sumptuary Laws ever ordained, were not the more valiant for it; and when our Armies were beaten in the last War,<sup>1</sup> there was much less Plenty amongst them, than in the glittering Days of our Victories.

Luxury is, in some sort, the Destroyer of Sloth and Idleness. The sumptuous Man would soon see the End of his Riches, if he did not endeavour to preserve them, or to acquire more; and he is, by so much the more engaged, to perform the Duties of Society, as he is exposed to the Eyes of Envy.

And to pass from the Particular, to the General. The Luxury of a Nation, is confined to a thousand Men, relatively to twenty Million of others, who are as happy as they, when a good Polity makes them enjoy, in Quiet, the Fruit of their Labour. If Plowmen or Artificers, riot in Luxury, it must be supported, by the additional Labour of the Plowmen and

1. [The War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14).]

Artificers. This will always form a Circle, which rendereth Luxury, little to be feared, in a Nation.

Luxury may indeed be hurtful in War, by a great Train of Equipages, and Servants, who may incumber and occasion a Scarcity in the Army. For this Reason, the military Ordinance regulates the Equipages of the principal Officers: And the General, in some Cases, restrains them yet further; as Water is distributed by Measure, in a Siege, or in a Ship detained at Sea. In these Cases, it would be of Use to have fewer Men, but in the general Polity of a State, there cannot be too many.

Perhaps it is owing to Luxury, that Drunkenness, which is much more hurtful to Body and Mind, is not now so common, in Towns, and in the Army, as it was formerly.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it seemeth to have retired into the Country, where Luxury is not yet arrived.

In a Common-wealth, where the Territory is of small Extent, and the People are obliged, in a great Measure, to live by their Labour, most Things are deemed Luxury. It is, but of late, that a Fiddle hath been admitted into \*\*\*,<sup>3</sup> where it hath given great Offence, to the antient People, who complain, that all is lost. This resembleth rather a Community of Recluses, than a Society of Freemen. Accordingly, when a Citizen hath acquired a larger Fortune, than he is permitted to expend, he removeth to a Place where he can enjoy it with Freedom, and he depriveth his Country of his Person, and his Effects. In another Republick,<sup>4</sup> where Musick, and the Licentiousness of Women bear Sway, there are sumptuary Laws, restrained to the City only. Some say, that Luxury is allowed in the Country, in order to ruin the Citizens; others will have it, that it is prohibited in the City, to enrich these same Citizens. Uncertainty will always happen in Politicks, when they are not reduced to their plain and general Principles, which are susceptible, of all the Demonstration that Morality can admit.

Bread, is of absolute Necessity, and woollen Manufactures, are of second Necessity: But the white Bread, and the fine Cloth, introduced by

2. Drunkenness, is no part of *French* Luxury. It were to be wished, that we could make the same Observation with respect to *Ireland*.

3. [Geneva.]

4. [Probably Venice.]



Monsieur *Colbert*, would appear, as the highest Luxury, if we were not daily accustomed to make Use of them. The Term Luxury is an idle Name, which should never be employed, in Considerations on Polity, and Commerce: Because it conveyeth uncertain, confused, and false Ideas, the misapplication whereof, might stop Industry in its very Source.

When, in the last War,<sup>5</sup> the Privateers of our maritime Towns, returned home, laden with the Spoils of the Enemy, and displayed their Opulency, by extraordinary Profusions; every one strove, to fit out more Ships, in hopes of gaining wherewithal to support, the like Expences. This Incitement, produced the great Services, the Privateers performed to the State, and the astonishing Actions of the *Buccaniers*. If they had returned from those Expeditions, with empty Honour only, in common with that of all Soldiers and Sailors, can it be imagined, they would have gone again to Sea? Or that Emulation, would have excited others to follow them? Rigid *Sparta* was neither more conquering, nor better governed, nor did it produce greater Men, than voluptuous *Athens*. There are but four *Lacedemonians*, and there are seven *Athenians*, among the illustrious Men, whose Lives are wrote by *Plutarch*, without reckoning, *Socrates* and *Plato* who are omitted.

The sumptuary Laws of *Licurgus*, deserve no more Regard, than his other Institutions, which are so shocking to Modesty. How could he expect that the Members of his Community, who had no Knowledge of future Rewards, could support the ambitious Spirit of Acquisition, through a thousand Hardships, and a thousand Dangers, without the Hopes of augmenting their Portion, or diminishing their Labour? Glory alone, without those Advantages, which are inseparable from a happy Existence, is not a sufficient Spur for the Multitude. It would be ridiculous to form a Project to make all *France*, live in common. Would not such a Project be attributed, to a Genius, that had never passed, the Limits of a Village.

*CATO*, the great Advocate for sumptuary Laws among the *Romans*, being bred up in Villages, had acquired the Manners of them. He is represented to us, as an avaritious and intemperate Man; even as an Usurer and a Drunkard. The sumptuous *Lucullus*, a greater Commander, and as just a Man as he, was always liberal and beneficent. The Reformer, who

5. [The War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14).]

by the Severity of his Way, would also render Life more severe, may perhaps be revered by the Populace, but he will be slighted by wise Men, who make it their Rule, to procure Ease and Comfort to Society.

Our sumptuary Laws have diminished, in proportion as our Polity hath grown more perfect. There were only three or four made in the Reign of the late King,<sup>6</sup> and they were concerning too rich Stuffs, and too costly Works of Gold and Silver, and foreign Laces: And even these Laws, as well as those made by his Predecessors, have been very seldom carried into Execution. For, before they had put a Stop to one fashionable Luxury, Commerce introduced another, still greater, which made the first to be easily forgotten. Thus Luxuries cannot subsist, but so long as they are relative to Commerce.

We will mention some of those Ordinances, to shew how needless they were, and what kind of Spirit directed the making of them.

CHARLEMAGNE forbids the wearing a *Sayon* of greater Value, than twenty *Sols*, and a *Rochet* worth above thirty. The *Abbé de Vertot*, informeth us, from the Treatise of Polity, wrote by *la Marre*,<sup>7</sup> that the *Sayon*, was a *Vest*, over which the *Rochet* was wore. Thus the Coat and Vest cost fifty *Sols*, which, according to the Encrease of the nominal Value of Money, make the Weight of one hundred and eighty *Livres*, at this Time. And if the Quantity of Money, at that time, be compared with what it is at present, it may make a Sum ten times greater.

In *Fontanon's* Collection of Ordinances, there is one, that limiteth, “the largeness of Breeches, at two thirds in Compass, and above all the Lining to be without Pockets, and not stuffed out with Horse-hair, Cotton, Flocks, or Wooll.” And, with regard to the Frugality of Tables, it was directed, “that there should not be, at Weddings, or Feasts, above three Courses, of six Dishes each, and one Dish not to be double, that is to say two Capons, or two Partridges, but there might be three Pidgeons, or the Equivalent, as twelve Larks, &c. Prohibition to all Cooks to serve up more, upon pain of a Fine, &c.”<sup>8</sup>

That might, at least, regulate the Number of Guests for one Table. A

6. [I.e., Louis XIV.]

7. [Nicolas de La Mare (1639–1723), *Traité de la police* (Paris: Cot, 1705; repr. 1975).]

8. [Antoine Fontanon, *Les edicts et ordonnances des rois de France depuis Louis VI* (Paris: Du Puy, 1585).]

*Roman* Tribune, regulated their Number to be, from three to nine. *Augustus* made a Law to allow twelve Guests, in Honour of the twelve great Divinities of *Paganism*. It is not worth while to relate so many trifling Things, and it is much less so, to search for, and examine them, in their first Source.

There was, in the Days of *Charles V.* a sort of Shoes, called *a la Poulaine*, the Toes of which, being very long, gave Occasion to People of fine Taste to contrive several Ornaments upon them, as Horns, Claws, and Nails. The Church cried out loudly against this Fashion, as being contrary to the Order of Nature, and disfiguring Man, in this Part of him. The Church condemned it, at the Council of *Paris*, in the Year 1212, and at the Council of *Angiers*, in the Year 1365, and in the Year 1368. King *Charles* suppressed them by Letters Patent, of which this is the Tenor.

“Prohibition to all Persons, of what Quality or Condition soever, upon pain of forfeiting ten *Florins*, to wear, hereafter, Shoes *a la Poulaine*; this Superfluity, being contrary to good Manners, in Derision of God, and the Church, through worldly Vanity, and extravagant Presumption.” The Dates of the two Councils, and of the King’s Ordinance, shew, that this Fashion lasted above one hundred and fifty Years. This Example, peculiar to our Nation, may give Room to suspect there was something more genteel in these kind of Shoes, than is represented. The Beak of Womens Shoes, hath, probably been saved, out of the general Shipwreck of the Shoes *a la Poulaine*.

Let us see at what Expence, Luxury was banished the Nation, during the first Race of our Kings. It is the *Abbe de Vertot*, who speaketh.<sup>9</sup> “A free, but savage Life; Ferocity of Manners, little Commerce with civiliz’d Nations, Ignorance of the Conveniencies of Life, contributed to keep Luxury from their Cottages; and we cannot form to our selves, a clearer, or more perfect Idea of those early Times, than by comparing them, with the kind of Life now led by the *Hurons*, and *Iroquois*.”<sup>10</sup> Yet the Author could not forbear, in the very same Dissertation, to declaim against Luxury.

9. [Abbé de Vertot (1655–1735), *Histoire des revolutions arrivées dans le gouvernement de la République romaine* (Paris: F. Barois, 1719).]

10. Let us observe, in this Place, that the Common People of *Ireland*, live in as wretched a Way, as the *Gauls* did during the first Race of their Kings. And as it is allowed,

The Degrees, are well enough distinguished, between the different Kinds of Necessities, and the Legislat[or] may very well rely thereupon. Workmen, will not be employed about Works for Luxury, until there be enough of the Commodities of second Necessity; and, in like manner, they will not be employed about these, until the Products of absolute Necessity, be fully supplied. There are twenty Million of Persons, who buy Bread; fewer Buyers of Stuffs; and yet fewer Purchasers of Linnen: And the Peasant doth not purchase Wine or Tobacco, until his more pressing Wants are satisfied.

What Matter is it to a State, if, through a foolish Vanity, a particular Person ruineth himself, by vying with his Neighbour, in Equipage? It is a Punishment he well deserveth. And Workmen, who are much more to be valued than he, are maintained thereby. What is said of a particular Person, may be applyed to a Family, and even to a Merchant, who is so imprudent, as to give a Credit, equally dangerous to both Parties, until the Law hath provided, for the speedy Payment of Debts. In a Regulation of K. *Charles IX.* for Moderation in Clothes, it is said, in the XVI Article. “And forasmuch as, the getting of Stuffs made of Silk upon Trust, hath encouraged People to run into those kinds of Superfluities in Dress, we enjoin all our Judges to refuse all Kinds of Process to Merchants, who, after Publication of these Presents, shall sell Stuffs made of Silk, upon Trust, to any Person whatsoever.”

Is it the Business of the Legislat[or], to stop Industry by such a Law, to put a Restraint upon Liberty, reduce Workmen into dangerous Idleness, and take away a new Motive to Labour? Whatever is, in it self pernicious, should be always prohibited; but the Inconvenience that may follow from a Law, which is good in it self, ought to have no Weight with the Legislator. He acts, without respect of Persons, and what he doth, tends to the wel-fare of the greater Number. Why are the Laws against Duelling made so severe, as to extend even to the Punishing of a Person,

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that the creating of Wants, is the likeliest Way to produce Industry in a People; and that, if our Peasants were accustomed to eat Beef, and wear Shoes, they would be more industrious; it seems to be the Business of all those, who wish to see this Country thrive, to procure comfortable Living among the lower Rank of People; and those of superior Degrees, will soon find the Benefit of it. To provide plentifully for the Poor, is to feed the Root, the Substance whereof, will shoot into the Branches and cause the Top to flourish.

who hath received the greatest Offence, but with an Intent to save the Lives of a greater Number of Persons.

The excessive Price paid for some trifling Provisions, which the Luxurious Man displayeth with Profusion, at an Entertainment, the Merit whereof, he would have to consist in the Expensiveness of it, is an Instance of the highest, and most ridiculous Kind of Luxury, and yet, why should this extravagant Expence be exclaimed against? The Money thus earned, would, if it lay in the Chest of the Luxurious Man, remain Dead to the Society. The Gardiner receiveth it, and hath deserved it, as a Recompence for his Labour, which is thereby excited again. His Children, almost naked, are thereby clothed; they eat Bread in Plenty, enjoy better Health, and labour with a cheerful Expectation. The same Money given to Beggars, would only serve to feed their Idleness and Debaucheries.

God forbid we should compare such a Manner of expending Sums of Money, with the great Motives of Charity, which giveth Assistance to shame-fac'd Poverty, and to Hospitals! Every other Virtue giveth Way, to this, the greatest of all Virtues, and which is always accompanied by Justice and Decency.<sup>11</sup> But, as we have already said, Men, are very rarely guided by the Rules of Religion. It is the Part of Religion, to endeavour to destroy Luxury, and it is the Business of the State, to make an Advantage of it: And when we mentioned frivolous Declamations, we did not mean the Declamations which are made from the Pulpit, but those which resemble the Satyrs of the Pagans.

There are some other Motives to Luxury of a lower Nature, which the Legislat[or] might likewise make Advantage of. A Man, who layeth out Money in building and adorning a magnificent Palace, doth nothing that is contrary to the State, or to Morality: But he cannot expect to have Honours paid him by the Publick, for so doing, because what he doth, is only for his own private Use. But he, who repaireth a High-Road, or buildeth Fountains, Aquaeducts and the like, would deserve honourable Marks of his Beneficence, by Statues, or by some other Distinctions, which might excite a new Emulation among the People.

Publick Shews, cannot be too great, too magnificent, or too frequent.

11. [*Bienfaisance*, or "beneficence".]

It is a kind of Traffick, whereby *France*, always maketh Advantage, and never loseth.

Luxury ought not to be confounded with the wearing of the *Indian* Goods, prohibited by the *Council of Trade*; For this Prohibition, is not so much, on Account of the Richness of those Goods, as to encourage the Consumption of much richer Stuffs of our own Manufacture.

We ought to believe this Prohibition to be useful, because it is so constantly continued, and perhaps upon good Experience. But the Way it is executed, is attended with so many Contrarieties, that one is at a Loss to know, what to think of it. The *Company of the Indies*, hath the sole Right of importing these Goods, and is not allowed to sell them, but in order to be carried to foreign Countries: And this is executed, at least in Appearance: For what Goods are found contrary to this Law, are publickly burnt.

And nevertheless, those Goods are to be met with every where. This must be, by Means of our Neighbours; and thus, they gain the Advantage of this rich Commerce, of which we have all the Trouble, by long and dangerous Voyages; And to which, the poor fraudulent Dealers, half tollerated and half punished, become at length the Victims.

The Alternative is evident. The Use of these Goods, is either of Advantage, or Disadvantage to us. In the first Case, let them be allowed, and we shall have them in Plenty, and enjoy the Profits of them. In the other Case, execute the Law with Rigour, and we shall reap the Benefit of the Prohibition, by the Consumption of our own Manufactures. If, by a Distinction more subtil, than solid, it is believed there must be a certain Quantity, to supply what Manufactures of our own, may be wanting, let the Quantity be determined, at more, or at less, and let our own People sell that Quantity. To say, that this is impracticable, must proceed from not knowing the force of Laws.

Stuffs, and Linnens, serve for clothing, and their Beauty and Finess, seem to make them more convenient; but, Diamonds serve only, to dress up a Head, or to incumber a Finger with a vain Lustre. They do not stand in the Place of any Product of our Labour, or make up for the Want of any Merchandize. The fine Diamonds, which are of an excessive Price, can scarcely be distinguished from our false Stones. Diamonds are

brought from very distant Countries, and we pay Silver for them: But we do not go on Purpose, and at great Expence, to seek them. It is a part of general Commerce, and Diamonds make a new Value of Circulation, which is received through all the World.

The Sovereign, who possesseth the Diamond Mines, hath not Men enough to defend his Territories, neither against his Neighbours, nor against the *European* Settlements. It is to him, that the Diamond Mines are hurtful. He employeth in them, thirty thousand Men, whose Days are shortned by this painful Labour, and who might be more usefully employed as Soldiers or Plowmen.

The Diamonds lately discovered in the *Brazils*, will, more certainly, beat down the Value of those of *India*, than they will encrease the Riches of that Colony. The Price of Diamonds must necessarily decrease, because their Quantity encreaseth and is not consumed. Sugars, and other Provisions, must keep up to a Price, because the annual Consumption of them encreaseth, in Proportion to their Produce.



## “The Worldling”

1736

FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET, known from an early age as Voltaire, was born in Paris in 1694. Though he was primarily a playwright, poet, and writer (he described himself in his autobiography as the author of *La Henriade*, an epic poem on the French King Henry IV), he turned increasingly in his later years to questions of social and political reform. Although he is most famous for his interventions on matters of religious toleration such as the case of Calas (1760s), his writings also embraced questions of economic and financial policy. In the *Lettres anglaises* (*Philosophical Letters*) of 1732, the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (*Philosophical Dictionary*) of 1764, and *L'homme aux quarante écus* (*Man of Forty Crowns*) of 1768, for example, he expressed some of his views on these topics.

By 1778, Voltaire had become the leading literary and intellectual figure in France, arguably in Europe, and was welcomed triumphantly back to Paris for the first time in nearly thirty years, shortly before his death.

The works included here are “Le Mondain” (literally, “The man of the world,” translated here as “The Worldling”) and “La Défense du mondain” (translated here as “The Man of the World”), from 1736 and 1738, as well as “Sur le luxe et le commerce” (translated here as “On Commerce and Luxury”), also from 1738. I use *The Works of Voltaire*, edited by Tobias Smollett and translated by William Fleming (New York: E. R. Du Mont, 1901), 42 vols. “The Worldling” appears in volume 36, pp. 84–88. Bracketed



notes are by the present editor; unbracketed ones are from the Smollett edition.

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## The Worldling.<sup>1</sup>

Others may with regret complain  
That 'tis not fair Astrea's<sup>2</sup> reign,  
That the famed golden age is o'er  
That Saturn, Rhea rule no more:  
Or, to speak in another style,  
That Eden's groves no longer smile.  
For my part, I thank Nature sage,  
That she has placed me in this age:  
Religionists may rail in vain;  
I own, I like this age profane;  
I love the pleasures of a court;  
I love the arts of every sort;  
Magnificence, fine buildings, strike me;  
In this, each man of sense is like me.  
I have, I own, a worldly mind,  
That's pleased abundance here to find;  
Abundance, mother of all arts,  
Which with new wants new joys imparts  
The treasures of the earth and main,  
With all the creatures they contain:  
These, luxury and pleasures raise;  
This iron age brings happy days.

1. This poem was written in 1736. It is a piece of humor founded upon philosophy and the public good.

2. [Roman goddess of justice who presided over a golden age.]

Needful superfluous things appear;  
They have joined together either sphere.  
See how that fleet, with canvas wings,  
From Texel, Bordeaux, London brings,  
By happy commerce to our shores,  
All Indus, and all Ganges stores;  
Whilst France, that pierced the Turkish lines,  
Sultans make drunk with rich French wines.  
Just at the time of Nature's birth,  
Dark ignorance o'erspread the earth;  
None then in wealth surpassed the rest,  
For naught the human race possessed.  
Of clothes, their bodies then were bare,  
They nothing had, and could not share:  
Then too they sober were and sage,  
Martialo<sup>3</sup> lived not in that age.  
Eve, first formed by the hand divine,  
Never so much as tasted wine.  
Do you our ancestors admire,  
Because they wore no rich attire?  
Ease was like wealth to them unknown,  
Was't virtue? ignorance alone.  
Would any fool, had he a bed,  
On the bare ground have laid his head?  
My fruit-eating first father, say,  
In Eden how rolled time away?  
Did you work for the human race,  
And clasp dame Eve with close embrace!  
Own that your nails you could not pare,  
And that you wore disordered hair,  
That you were swarthy in complexion,  
And that your amorous affection  
Had very little better in't  
Than downright animal instinct.

3. The author of a treatise entitled "The French Cook."

Both weary of the marriage yoke  
You supped each night beneath an oak  
On millet, water, and on mast,  
And having finished your repast,  
On the ground you were forced to lie,  
Exposed to the inclement sky:  
Such in the state of simple nature  
Is man, a helpless, wretched creature.  
Would you know in this cursed age,  
Against which zealots so much rage,  
To what men blessed with taste attend  
In cities, how their time they spend?  
The arts that charm the human mind  
All at his house a welcome find;  
In building it, the architect  
No grace passed over with neglect.  
To adorn the rooms, at once combine  
Poussin, Correggio the divine,<sup>4</sup>  
Their works on every panel placed  
Are in rich golden frames incased.  
His statues show Bouchardon's skill,<sup>5</sup>  
Plate of Germain, his sideboards fill.  
The Gobelin tapestry, whose dye  
Can with the painter's pencil vie,  
With gayest coloring appear  
As ornaments on every pier.  
From the superb salon are seen  
Gardens with Cyprian myrtle green.  
I see the sporting waters rise  
By jets d'eau<sup>6</sup> almost to the skies.  
But see the master's self approach

4. [Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) and Antonio Correggio (c. 1490–1534) were famous painters.]

5. [Edmé Bouchardon (1698–1762) was a classical sculptor.]

6. [I.e., bursts of water.]

And mount into his gilded coach,  
A house in motion, to the eyes  
It seems as through the streets it flies.  
I see him through transparent glasses  
Loll at his ease as on he passes.  
Two pliant and elastic springs  
Carry him like a pair of wings.  
At Bath, his polished skin inhales  
Perfumes, sweet as Arabian gales.  
Camargot<sup>7</sup> at the approach of night  
Julia, Goffin by turns invite.  
Love kind and bounteous on him pours  
Of choicest favors plenteous showers.  
To the opera house he must repair,  
Dance, song and music charm him there.  
The painter's art to strike the sight,  
Does there with that blest art unite;  
The yet more soft, persuasive skill,  
Which can the soul with pleasure thrill.  
He may to damn an opera go,  
And yet perforce admire Rameau.<sup>8</sup>  
The cheerful supper next invites  
To luxury's less refined delights.  
How exquisite those sauces flavor!  
Of those ragouts I like the savor.  
The man who can in cookery shine,  
May well be deemed a man divine.  
Chloris<sup>9</sup> and Aegle at each course  
Serve me with wine, whose mighty force  
Makes the cork from the bottle fly  
Like lightning darting from the sky.  
Bounce! to the ceiling it ascends,

7. [Marie-Anne Cupis de Camargo (1710–70) was a famous ballerina.]

8. [Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) was an influential music theorist and composer.]

9. [Chloris was a nymph who was transformed into the goddess Flora.]

And laughter the apartment rends.  
In this froth, just observers see  
The emblem of French vivacity.  
The following day new joys inspires,  
It brings new pleasures and desires.  
Mentor, Telemachus<sup>10</sup> descant  
Upon frugality, and vaunt  
Your Ithaca and your Salentum  
To ancient Greeks, since they content them:  
Since Greeks in abstinence could find  
Ample supplies of every kind.  
The work, though not replete with fire,  
I for its elegance admire:  
But I'll be whipped Salentum through  
If thither I my bliss pursue.  
Garden of Eden, much renowned,  
Since there the devil and fruit were found.  
Huetius, Calmet,<sup>11</sup> learned and bold,  
Inquired where Eden lay of old:  
I am not so critically nice,  
Paris to me's a paradise.

10. [Telemachus was Odysseus's son; Mentor was his wise counselor.]

11. [Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630–1721) was a prolific scholar of Church history; Augustin Calmet (1672–1757) was a Benedictine biblical scholar.]



# “The Man of the World”

1738

THIS POEM is an “apology for luxury” written by Voltaire (see headnote to chapter 16). The edition used here is *The Works of Voltaire*, edited by Tobias Smollett and translated by William Fleming, 42 vols. (New York: E. R. Du Mont, 1901), 36:170–74. Bracketed notes are by the present editor; unbracketed ones are from the Smollett edition.

## The Man of the World<sup>1</sup>

### An Apology for Luxury

At dinner, ’twas one day my case  
 By a rank bigot to have place,  
 Who said, I on it might depend  
 That hell would have me in the end;  
 And he an angel heaven’s host in

1. This piece was written as a defense of the “Mondain” (see “The Worldling”), which had been prosecuted.

Would loudly laugh to see me roasting.  
Roasting for what? "Why for your crimes;  
You've told us in some impious rhymes  
That Adam, ere the days of sin,  
Was oft with rain wet to the skin;  
That he his time most dully spent,  
Ate fruit, and drank the element;  
That he his nails could never pare;  
And that he was not over fair.  
You Epicurus' doctrine<sup>2</sup> teach,  
And for luxurious pleasures preach."  
Having these words in passion said,  
He swallowed wine like amber red;  
Wine, which by its taste confessed  
The grape from whence the juice was pressed.  
And I, while crimson stained his face,  
Addressed the saint brimful of grace:  
"Religious sir, whence comes this wine?  
I own its gusto is divine."  
"This wine is from Canary brought,"  
Said he, "and should be nectar thought;  
It is in every respect  
A liquor fit for the elect."  
"That coffee which when full refection  
The feast has given, so helps digestion,  
Whence comes it?" "It from heaven descended,  
A gift by God for me intended."  
"But sure 'twas in Arabia sought  
By men, and thence with trouble brought.  
Both porcelain and chinaware  
For you men labor to prepare;  
'Twas baked, and with a thousand dyes  
Diversified, to please your eyes;  
That silver, where such art's displayed,

2. [I.e., that pleasure is the highest good.]

Of which cups, salvers, plates are made,  
Which with mild lustre faintly shines,  
Was dug from Potosi's rich mines.<sup>3</sup>  
For thee the world at work has been,  
That thou at ease might vent thy spleen  
Against that world, which for thy pleasure  
Has quite exhausted all its treasure.  
Thou real worldling, learn to know  
Thyself, and some indulgence show  
To others, whom so much you blame  
For vices, whilst you have the same.  
Know luxury, which destroys a state  
That's poor, enriches one that's great;  
That pomp and splendor deemed so vain,  
Are proofs still of a prosperous reign.  
The rich can spend his ample store;  
The poor is grasping still at more.  
On you cascades now fix your sight,  
In them the Naiads<sup>4</sup> take delight;  
See how those floods of water roam  
Covering the marble with a foam.  
These waves give moisture to the fields,  
Earth beautified more rich crops yields.  
But should this source be once decayed,  
The grass would wither, flowers would fade.  
Thus wealth, in France and Britain's states,  
Through various channels circulates.  
Excess prevails, the great are vain,  
Their follies oft the poor maintain;  
And Industry, whom opulence hires,  
To riches by slow steps aspires.  
I hear a staunch, pedantic train  
Of pleasure's ill effects complain,

3. [Potosi: Southern Bolivian site of silver discoveries in the sixteenth century.]

4. [Naiads, freshwater nymphs.]



Who Dionysius, Dion cite,  
 Plutarch and Horace the polite,<sup>5</sup>  
 And cry that Curius, and a score  
 Of consuls ending in 'us' more,  
 Tilled the earth during war's alarms,  
 And managed both the plow and arms;  
 That corn which flourished in the land,  
 Was sown by a victorious hand.  
 'Tis well, sirs, and I am content  
 To such relations to assent.  
 But tell me, should the gods incite  
 Auteuil against Vaugirard to fight,<sup>6</sup>  
 Must not the victor from the field  
 Returning home his land have tilled?  
 Rome the august was heretofore  
 A hole like Auteuil, nothing more.  
 When those chiefs, from god Mars descended,  
 Attacked a meadow or defended,  
 When to the field they took their way,  
 Their standard was a truss of hay.<sup>7</sup>  
 Jove's image wooden under Tullus  
 Was beaten gold when lived Lucullus.<sup>8</sup>  
 Then don't bestow fair virtue's prize  
 On what from poverty had rise.  
 France flourished by wise Colbert's<sup>9</sup> care,  
 When once a dunce, intent to spare,  
 Presumed the progress to oppose  
 Of arts, by which famed Lyons rose,

5. [Dionysius or Bacchus, god of joy and of wine; Plutarch (46?–?120) and Horace (65–8 B.C.) were known for their sobriety.]

6. [Perhaps a reference to two neighborhoods in Paris.]

7. A handful of hay at the end of a pole, called Manipulus, was the first standard of the Romans.

8. [May refer to Tullus, King of Rome c. 665 B.C. Lucullus (c. 110–56 B.C.) was a Roman general noted for the extravagance of his retirement.]

9. [Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1621–83), leading royal minister under Louis XIV, 1661–83.]

And by cursed avarice possessed  
Had industry and arts suppressed;  
That minister, as wise as great,  
By luxury enriched the state.  
He the great source of arts increased,  
From north to south, from west to east.  
Our neighbors all with envy fired  
Paid dear for genius they admired.  
A monarch's portrait here I'll draw,  
Rome, Paris, Pekin, such ne'er saw;  
'Tis Solomon, that king who shone  
A Plato, while he filled a throne;  
Who all things was to know allowed,  
From hyssop to the cedar proud;  
In luxury he surpassed mankind,  
With glittering gold his palace shined.  
All various pleasures he could taste,  
A thousand beauties he embraced.  
With beauties he was well supplied;  
Give me but one, I'm satisfied.  
One's full enough for me; but I  
Cannot with sage or monarch vie."  
Thus speaking, I perceived each guest  
To approve of my discourse professed.  
Sir Piety no more replied,  
But, laughing, still the bottle plied.  
While all, who well knew what I meant,  
Seemed to my reasons to assent.



## “On Commerce and Luxury”

1738

THIS ESSAY is Voltaire’s contribution to the public controversy over the Law system that broke out in the late 1730s, especially after the publication of Melon’s 1734 essay (see chapter 15). The edition used here is *The Works of Voltaire*, edited by Tobias Smollett and translated by William Fleming, 42 vols. (New York: E. R. Du Mont, 1901), 37:211–18. Bracketed notes are by the present editor; unbracketed ones are from the Smollett edition.

### On Commerce and Luxury

Within the last twenty years commerce has been better understood in France than it had ever before been, from the reign of Pharamond to that of Louis XIV.<sup>1</sup> Before this period it was a secret art, a kind of chemistry in the hands of three or four persons, who actually made gold, but without communicating the secret by which they had been enriched. The

1. [Pharamond, a legendary Frankish chieftain; Louis XIV (1638–1715), King of France.]

body of the nation were in such profound ignorance of this important secret that we had neither minister nor magistrate that knew what the words “annuities,” “principal,” “exchange,” or “dividend” meant. It was destined that a Scotchman called John Law<sup>2</sup> should come into France and overturn the whole economy of our government to instruct us. He had the courage, in the most horrible confusion of our finances, and in the time of a most dreadful famine, to establish a bank and an India company. This was giving a vomit to the sick; we took too much, and convulsions were the consequence: but, at length, from the ruins of his system, we had left us an India company, with a capital amounting to the sum of fifty millions of livres. What had been the case had we taken a moderate dose of that salutary medicine? In my opinion, the state had certainly been the most vigorous and powerful in the whole world.

There prevailed still among us, at the time when the present India company was established, a prejudice so very strong that the Sorbonne declared the sharing of dividends of actions usurious. In the same manner the German printers, who came to establish their art in France, were, in 1570, accused of witchcraft.

We Frenchmen, there is no denying it, have come very late into everything. Our first steps in the arts have been to thwart the introduction of those truths which came to us from abroad: we defended theses against the circulation of the blood, after it had been demonstrated in England; against the revolution of the earth, which had been made evident in Germany; not even the most salutary remedies have escaped being proscribed by an arret. To discover any new truths, to propose anything of general use to mankind is a sure step to persecution. John Law, that Scotchman to whom we owe our India company, and all we know of commerce, was driven out of France, and died in misery at Venice; and yet, although we had scarcely three hundred merchant ships of any burden when he proposed his system, we have now—in 1738—over eighteen hundred. Though we owe them all to him, we are yet exceedingly ungrateful to the memory of our benefactor.

The principles of commerce are known at present to all the world: we are beginning to have good books on that subject. The essay “*Sur le*

2. [See chapter 9 in this volume.]

*Commerce*,” of Melon, is the work of a man of sense, a good citizen, and an excellent philosopher:<sup>3</sup> it has a tincture of the spirit of his age; and I do not think that even in the time of M. Colbert, there were two persons in France capable of producing such a work. There are, however, a number of errors in that excellent book; so great progress as he has made in the road to truth was no easy matter: it is a service done to the public to point out the mistakes that happen in a useful book. It is indeed in such only we should look for them. It is showing respect to a good work to contradict it; a bad one does not deserve that honor.

The following observations are such as seem contrary to truth:

1. He says those countries in which are the greatest number of beggars are the most barbarous. I believe there is no city more civilized than Paris, and where at the same time there are more beggars. This is a vermin that attach themselves to riches; the drones run from the extremities of the kingdom to Paris, in order to lay opulence and good nature under contribution. This is an abuse difficult to root out, but which proves only that there are wretches in such a country, who prefer begging to getting their livelihood by honest industry. This may be a proof of wealth and negligence, but by no means of barbarity.

2. He repeats in several places that Spain would be more powerful without America. He grounds his observations on the depopulation of Spain, and on the weakness under which that state has long languished. This notion of America weakening Spain is to be met with in a hundred different authors. But had they given themselves the trouble to reflect that the treasures of America were the cement of the power of Charles V., and that by their means Philip II. would have been master of Europe, if Henry the Great, Elizabeth, and the princes of Orange had not been heroes, those authors would have been of a different way of thinking.<sup>4</sup> It has been imagined that the Spanish monarchy has been in a manner annihilated, because their kings Philip III., Philip IV., and Charles II. were either unfortunate or weak princes.<sup>5</sup> But let us see how this monarchy has

3. [See chapter 15 in this volume.]

4. [Charles V, Habsburg Emperor (r. 1519–55); Philip II, King of Spain (r. 1555–98); Henry IV, King of France (r. 1589–1610); Queen Elizabeth I of Great Britain (r. 1558–1603); the princes of Orange ruled the Dutch state.]

5. [Philip III (r. 1598–1621), Philip IV (r. 1621–65), Charles II (r. 1665–1700).]

resumed new life under Cardinal Alberoni;<sup>6</sup> let us cast our eyes toward Africa and Italy, those theatres of the conquests of the present Spanish government, and we shall be forced to own that nations are just what kings and ministers make them. Courage, fortitude, industry, every talent remains buried till some great genius appears, who rouses and sets them in motion. The capitol is at present inhabited by Recollets, and chaplets are now distributed on the spot where vanquished kings followed the chariot of Paulus Aemilius.<sup>7</sup> Let but an emperor take up his residence in Rome, and let this emperor be a Julius Caesar, every Roman will become a Caesar with him.

As to the depopulation of Spain, it is not nearly so great as what it is given out to be: and even after all, this kingdom, and the states of America depending on it, are at this time so many provinces of the same empire, which are separated only by a space that may be sailed over in two months. In a word, their treasures become ours, by a necessary and unavoidable circulation. Their cochineal, their quinine, their mines of Mexico and Peru, are ours, and by the same means our manufactures are Spanish. Had America been a burden to them, is it to be thought they would have persisted so long in denying admittance into that country to strangers? Do people preserve with so much care the principle and source of ruin, after having had two hundred years to consider it?

3. He says that the loss of their soldiers is not the most fatal consequence in their wars; that a hundred thousand men are a very small number in comparison to twenty millions; but that an increase of taxes renders twenty millions of persons miserable. I will grant him twenty millions of souls in France; but I will not admit that it is better to have a hundred thousand soldiers cut to pieces than to put the rest of the nation to an additional expense in taxes. This is not all; here is a strange and fatal miscalculation. Louis XIV. had, reckoning the whole body of the marine, four hundred and forty thousand men in pay during the war in 1701.<sup>8</sup> The Roman Empire never had such a numerous army on foot. It has been observed that about one-fifth of an army is destroyed by the end

6. [Julio Cardinal Alberoni (1664–1752), leading official under Philip V.]

7. [Paulus Aemilius, consul in 168 B.C., when he defeated Perseus, King of Macedonia.]

8. [War of the Spanish Succession.]

of a campaign by disease, accidents, fire, and sword. Here then are eighty-eight thousand men destroyed each year; therefore, at the expiration of ten years, the state has lost eight hundred and eighty thousand men, together with all the children they would have procreated in that time. At present, if France contains about eighteen millions of souls, take away about one-half for the women, together with all the old men, the children, the clergy, the monks, the magistrates, and those who are necessary to carry on manufactures and to till the ground, what number remains for the defence of the nation? In eighteen millions you will hardly find eighteen hundred thousand men, and the war in ten years is supposed to have destroyed nearly nine hundred thousand. Thus the war destroys one-half a nation's men capable of bearing arms in her defence; and you say a new impost is more disastrous to a nation than the death of so many of her best people.

After correcting these inadvertencies, which the author would have corrected himself, permit me to consider what he has advanced on freedom of commerce, on manufactures, on exchange, and chiefly with regard to luxury. This wise apology for luxury is by so much the more estimable in this author, and has so much the more force from his mouth, as his life was that of a philosopher.<sup>9</sup>

What then is luxury? It is a word without any precise idea, much such another expression as when we say the eastern and western hemispheres: in fact, there is no such thing as east and west; there is no fixed point where the earth rises and sets; or, if you will, every point on it is at the same time east and west. It is the same with regard to luxury; for either there is no such thing, or else it is in all places alike. Lead us back to those times when our grandfathers wore no shirts. Had anyone told them that they must wear finer and lighter stuffs than the finest cloth, white as snow, and must change them every day; and even after they were a little dirty must, with a composition prepared with great art, restore them to their former lustre; everybody would cry out, "What luxury! What effeminacy! Such a magnificence as this is hardly sufferable in a king. You want to corrupt our manners and ruin the nation." Do they understand by luxury the expense of an opulent person? Must he then live like the poor, he whose

9. [Melon's chapter on luxury is chapter 15 in the present volume.]

profusion alone is sufficient to maintain the poor? Expensiveness should be the thermometer of a private man's fortune, as general luxury is the infallible mark of a powerful and flourishing empire. It was under Charlemagne, Francis I., and under the ministry of the great Colbert,<sup>10</sup> and the present administration, that men lived at the greatest expense; that is to say, that the arts were encouraged and cultivated.

What would the tart, the satirical la Bruyère<sup>11</sup> be at? What means this affected misanthrope, by crying out: "Our ancestors knew not what it was to prefer taste to utility; they were never known to light themselves with waxen tapers; this was a commodity reserved for the altar and the royal palace. They were never heard to say: 'Let my horses be put to my coach'; good pewter shone on their tables and side-boards; their silver was laid up in their coffers," etc. Is not this a very pleasant eulogium of our forefathers, to say they had neither taste, industry, neatness, nor plenty? Their silver was laid up in their coffers. Were this really true, it was certainly the greatest folly imaginable. Money is made for circulation, to bring the secrets of art to light, and to purchase the industry and labors of men: he who hoards it is a bad citizen, and even a bad economist. It is by circulating it that we render ourselves useful to our country and to ourselves. Will men never grow weary of commending the follies of antiquity, with a view to ridicule the advantages of our own times?

This work of Melon has produced another by M. Dutot,<sup>12</sup> which is preferable, both in point of depth and justness of reasoning. This work of M. Dutot is likely to give birth to another, which will probably carry the palm from both the others, as it is the production of a statesman. Never was the study of the belles-lettres so closely connected with that of the revenues, which is an additional merit in the age in which we live.

10. [Charlemagne (742–814), Holy Roman Emperor; Francis I (r. 1515–47), King of France; Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83), finance minister under Louis XIV.]

11. [Jean de La Bruyère (1645–96), *Caractères* (1688–96).]

12. [Dutot, *Réflexions politiques sur les finances et le commerce* (La Haye: V. & A. Prevost, 1738), 2 vols.]





## *Spectacle of Nature*

1746

NOËL-ANTOINE PLUCHE was born in 1688. After completing his studies, he became a professor first of humanities, then of rhetoric in his hometown of Rheims, before taking holy orders. The Bishop of Laon made him director of the *collège* (secondary school), an offer he accepted partly to escape the controversy that arose around him for his refusal to swear adherence to the bull *Unigenitus* (1713). After a *lettre de cachet*° was prepared against him, he was provided with private tutorial positions by both Gasville (royal intendant of Rouen) and the Englishman Lord Stafford. After a chance discovery of information useful to the Crown, he was offered a lucrative priory by Cardinal Fleury—which he refused on principle because of his continued refusal to sign *Unigenitus*. Still, his teachings and writings began to gain some notoriety. He became deaf, retired in 1749 to Varenne-Saint-Maur, and died of apoplexy in 1761.

His major work, *Spectacle de la nature*, was an eight-volume study of life and creation that was translated into virtually all European languages, still appearing in abridged editions in the early nineteenth century. His other works include *Histoire du ciel* (1739), *La Mécanique des langues* (1751), and *Concorde de la Géographie des différents âges* (1765), as well as works on Holy Scripture and French royal coronation ceremonies.

The present excerpt is a new translation of the full text of the twenty-fifth “Entretien,” or “Conversation,” the one devoted to commerce and which first appeared in 1746, from *Spectacle de la Nature* (Paris: La Veuve Estienne,

1732–51), 8 vols., 7:439–47. It offers an example of how a popular writer viewed the place of commerce in the education of a well-bred Frenchman.

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## Spectacle of Nature

Whatever is gathered and fashioned by the arts for our use is conveyed to us by commerce thanks to exchanges or ordered compensations. All our previous conversations constitute virtually a running exposé of the raw materials of commerce, and there is no point in going over it again. A few of those very conversations dealt with the places where there is the greatest trade, and in particular with the current distribution of the commerce of both our Companies and our European Colonies on the various continents.

As far as the most ordinary and at the same time most lovely processes of commerce are concerned, I know, my dear friend, that your upbringing has been too good to deprive you of the advantage of knowing them. You know their merit and the way they work, because you have had instructors who, besides the study of literature and nature, always took care to reserve an exercise for the study of society's needs and the means to fulfill them. For you, the currencies, weights and measures of the ancients have been reduced to current values, and the values that are used among us have been compared clearly enough to those in current use among our neighbors. How many times have I seen you coming back from a friend's house—a merchant—giving me a faithful report of what a currency exchange and bill of exchange is, and telling me how one can transfer a payment from one place to another without taking the risks which are inseparable from the transfer of funds? I have heard you making a clear distinction between the fair benefits of currency exchange and the illegal interest required beyond a capital that has been lent out. I have heard you present the reasons which are put forward to

defend arbitrary usury, and then describe them as empty words. For we find security only in the rules laid down by the Church and invariably supported by the worldly courts, both to focus the mind and to close the door on cupidity. I have seen you grasp firmly the wise principle which supports peace in society by giving preference to the teachings of the Church over mere reasoning; for the rule of the Church prevents the destruction of individuals through the fair restraint in profit, whereas cupidity—of even the most obnoxious kind—always saves itself under the protection of false philosophy. It seduces itself. It masks its own ugliness by claiming it shelters those in need. Cupidity never acts without allowing itself some reasoning, which is often specious, but always frivolous because it lacks security.

We have not failed to show you the great advantage in transferring your money to Lyon, Rome or London, with a bill addressed to your correspondent so as to withdraw your sum from a banker or a merchant living on site. We have informed you of the subsequent use you can make of this bill of exchange, in transferring it to others as a commodity of genuine quality. We have also informed you of the care one takes to protest when the person who is in charge of the payments refuses to make them. Finally, you were informed of all the risks and limits necessary in a commerce of paper money, which may help the first few operations between trustworthy people, but which degenerates as it becomes a common currency. For metallic currency is a real commodity and a solid compensation which can make up for everything. But paper money is worth nothing more than a piece of leather, which has no real value or use in itself; the credit which had been given to it by the guarantee of a few individuals who had given their names to it gets suddenly destroyed because either the credit or the fortunes of these individuals collapses.

Because you could neither learn these processes through the practice of commerce, nor always have the lessons of your gentle merchant [*négociant*°] at will, I have often seen you supplementing or obviating the need for his instructions by reading the *Treatise on Commerce* by Samuel Richard, and sometimes *The Perfect Tradesman* by Jacques Savary, and more ordinarily *The Dictionary of Commerce*, which was written by his

two sons—one of them an Inspector of our factories, the other a Canon of St.-Maur, a very good writer and an even better citizen.<sup>1</sup>

There is no book less fitting to satisfy a mind accustomed to the abstractions of metaphysics. There is none more attractive for those who have been filled by a judicious instructor with a taste for the mundane sciences and a tender love of the welfare of society. You have often spent nights and days either stopping at the trade fairs of Archangel, Lyon, Bander-Abbas, or Portobello, or keeping busy with a problem in natural history, or dealing with the way merchants organize their account books, with the way their payments are done, with the rules of their association, with the expeditious methods used to settle their quarrels with the other merchants before the Judge-Consul, or with the custom of guaranteeing what is sent out to sea by an insurance company by giving five, six, or seven per cent on the returns; so that as there are more successful returns than shipwrecks or losses, the profit is great for the insurers, and the insured enjoy perfect tranquillity.

I will not forget the reflection you made one day on the charming variety in this book, and on the great necessity of knowing most of the things it contains. You said people claim that a few of the memoirs the Savarys based their work on can be improved. I hope and wish for it; but as of now it is the best philosophy available.

May all good minds become philosophers after your fashion, and learn either in this book or elsewhere how to serve the society for which we are made. Making people happy by the ease of communications and the proliferation of aids of which they have an ever-renewed need—either in a high position or in a subordinate one—this is certainly the most pleasant philosophy. It is precisely this which makes a true citizen, but at the same time, it is the definition of the spirit of commerce.

The hope for a legitimate profit may be a spur in all social conditions, but it is not the characteristic which distinguishes the skilled trader

1. [The references are to Samuel Ricard, *Traité général du commerce* (Amsterdam, 1700), Jacques Savary (1622–90), *Le Parfait négociant* (Paris, 1675), Jacques Savary des Brûlons (1657–1716) and Philémon-Louis Savary (1654–1721), *Dictionnaire universel du commerce* (Paris, 1723).]

[*négociant*<sup>o</sup>] from the orator or the artist. Love of the most sordid gain may ensconce itself in the Fleur-de-lis or embark for the Coromandel;<sup>2</sup> but it is the spirit of justice and peace which makes the true magistrate, and it is the passion to provide his country with the enjoyment of what it desires that makes a trader [*négociant*] highly esteemed. A skilled merchant [*commerçant*<sup>o</sup>] is more than a good citizen. The extent of his services turns him, as it were, into a statesman; and of all the sciences, his is, after religion, the one whose progress one must most strongly desire.

If it were merely a question of an honest pleasure, “a general trader of good sense,” Mr. Addison says, “is pleasanter company than a general scholar.”<sup>3</sup> We are very happy to have the assistance of books. They are the first supplement of the experience we lack. But the ancients and not a few moderns put in their books what they had heard of or what they thought rather than what they had seen or experienced. We are far from despising them: what pains do we not take to understand them? But it is clear that those who have seen and practiced things are by rights our first libraries.

I admit that books like that written by Pliny may help us even in their false accusations if we take care to clarify and rectify everything with the assistance of witnesses, guarantors, and experience; but when we listen to an experienced trader [*négociant*], we draw from the source. The knowledge we gain in this way is distorted neither by the multiplication of accounts, nor by the mingling of others’ thoughts. He himself is the sure commentator as well as the faithful guarantor of what he reports. He has seen it: the fear of misunderstandings has kept him attentive to everything, and what has this fear not taught him?

The disposition of the seas, coasts and provinces; the measurement of distances; the roads’ dangers; national needs and interests; the laws and customs of places; the dominant trends; the ways to vary one’s behavior according to the persons and customs; local productions, natural curiosities, modern inventions; whether to provide hitherto unknown aids or to improve upon what is already in use; and in addition to this pleas-

2. [The references are to the emblem of the French monarchy and to a part of the Eastern coast of India.]

3. [*The Spectator* no. 2 (Mar. 2, 1711); the piece appears to have been written by Steele.]

ant knowledge, the origins, preparations and exchanges of all the materials that are in use—these are the subjects of discussion for a skilled trader [*commerçant*]. His good mind has had him draw benefits from everything, but the diversity of objects, and the necessity of wisely resolving each new situation, have extended his natural understanding no less than they have embellished his conversation.

You see, Sir, that there is more than pleasure to hope for from such a man. He is the compass of society. Everybody asks for his advice or arbitration. He is the soul of the enterprises of his family and his city. How many mere traders [*négociants*°] have we seen who became counsellors to the wisest ministers, and were even appreciated by our kings who subsequently entrusted them with the best negotiations and accorded them nobility!

I would have innumerable observations to make here about the high opinion we should have of commerce, about the means of training perfect merchants [*commerçants*], about the usefulness of travel and the best method of turning it to account, and about the various people whose inclinations we should turn towards commerce. But instead of telling you my thoughts about this—which have little authority—I will report to you the conversation I witnessed a few days ago. The whole of it dealt with the questions which you and I both are keen to have explained on this matter. And maybe it will make a greater impression on your mind, because it took place between two men of uncommonly refined judgement—one a highly distinguished nobleman, the other a merchant [*marchand*°] accomplished in the finest enterprises.



## “Of Refinement in the Arts”

1752

THE SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHER David Hume was born in 1711 into a family of modest landed wealth. After writing his masterpiece, *Treatise on Human Nature*, in 1739, which he complained “fell dead-born from the press,” Hume turned his talents to writings that would be more accessible to worldly as well as philosophical audiences. Thus, in the 1740s, he came out with a very successful and influential collection of *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, from which the present essay is taken, which he continued to revise and expand in the 1750s. In 1752, he became librarian for the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh.

Hume was a friend of Adam Smith, who was twelve years his junior and who acknowledged his debt both to Hume’s general philosophy and to his essays on economic subjects, such as the one chosen here. Hume also wrote a justly influential *History of England* (beginning in 1754) as well as important philosophical works such as *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), and *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (published posthumously). A notorious atheist, he died without recanting his religious views and was publicly eulogized by Adam Smith in 1776.

“Of Refinement in the Arts” is the later title of an essay originally published in 1752 under the title “Of Luxury.” It contains some of his most far-reaching observations on the character of “commercial society.” It is reprinted here with permission from *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*,

edited by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), pp. 268–80. Unbracketed notes are by Hume, bracketed ones by Miller.

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## Of Refinement in the Arts

Luxury is a word of an uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blameable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person. The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be exactly fixed, more than in other moral subjects. To imagine, that the gratifying of any sense, or the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a head, that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. I have, indeed, heard of a monk abroad, who, because the windows of his cell opened upon a noble prospect, made a *covenant with his eyes* never to turn that way, or receive so sensual a gratification. And such is the crime of drinking CHAMPAGNE or BURGUNDY, preferably to small beer or porter. These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists. To be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one's expence entirely to such a gratification, without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart destitute of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all



laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprized at those preposterous opinions, which have been entertained concerning it; while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and represent it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions, incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving, *first*, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both on *private* and on *public* life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; action, pleasure, and indolence: And though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person; yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroys all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that, where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties; and by

an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits, exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts, is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age, which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers, and ship-carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation, which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry*, *knowledge*, and

*humanity*, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.

Nor are these advantages attended with disadvantages, that bear any proportion to them. The more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses. One may safely affirm, that the TARTARS<sup>1</sup> are oftener guilty of beastly gluttony, when they feast on their dead horses, than EUROPEAN courtiers with all their refinements of cookery. And if libertine love, or even infidelity to the marriage-bed, be more frequent in polite ages, when it is often regarded only as a piece of gallantry; drunkenness, on the other hand, is much less common: A vice more odious, and more pernicious both to mind and body. And in this matter I would appeal, not only to an OVID or a PETRONIUS,<sup>2</sup> but to a SENECA or a CATO. We know, that CAESAR, during CATILINE's conspiracy, being necessitated to put into CATO's hands a *billet-doux*, which discovered an intrigue with SERVILIA, CATO's own sister, that stern philosopher threw it back to him with indignation; and in the bitterness of his wrath, gave him the appellation of drunkard, as a term more opprobrious than that with which he could more justly have reproached him.<sup>3</sup>

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone: They diffuse their beneficial influence on the *public*, and render the government as great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The encrease and consumption of all the commodities, which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society; because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In

1. [The name Tartars was applied generally to nomads of the Asian steppes and deserts, including Mongols and Turks.]

2. [Petronius (died A.D. 65), an intimate of Nero and his official "arbiter of taste," is probably author of the satirical novel known as the *Satyricon*, a surviving portion of which describes the absurd conduct of a wealthy freedman, Trimalchio, as he becomes increasingly drunk at a banquet.]

3. [See Plutarch, *Lives*, in the life of Cato the Younger, sec. 24. Cato threw the note back to Caesar with the words "Take it, thou sot" (Loeb translation by Bernadotte Perrin).]

a nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies, from the industry of such slothful members.

The bounds of all the EUROPEAN kingdoms are, at present, nearly the same they were two hundred years ago: But what a difference is there in the power and grandeur of those kingdoms? Which can be ascribed to nothing but the encrease of art and industry. When CHARLES VIII. of FRANCE invaded ITALY, he carried with him about 20,000 men: Yet this armament so exhausted the nation, as we learn from GUICCIARDIN, that for some years it was not able to make so great an effort.<sup>4</sup> The late king of FRANCE, in time of war, kept in pay above 400,000 men;<sup>5</sup> though from MAZARINE's death to his own, he was engaged in a course of wars that lasted near thirty years.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge inseparable from ages of art and refinement; as, on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture. Can we expect, that a government will be well modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning-wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage? Not to mention, that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and make the return to submission impracticable, by cutting off all hopes of

4. [Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), *Storia d'Italia* (History of Italy), bks. 1–3.]

5. The inscription on the PLACE-DE-VENDOME says 440,000. [Hume refers in the text to Louis XIV, who died in 1715. Louis had assumed absolute power upon the death of his minister, the Cardinal Mazarin, in 1661. Louis-Joseph, duc de Vendôme, was one of the king's leading generals during the War of the Grand Alliance (1689–97) and the early years of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14). England was allied against France in both wars.]

pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance. Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe, and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle, where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

Nor need we fear, that men, by losing their ferocity, will lose their martial spirit, or become less undaunted and vigorous in defence of their country or their liberty. The arts have no such effect in enervating either the mind or body. On the contrary, industry, their inseparable attendant, adds new force to both. And if anger, which is said to be the whetstone of courage, loses somewhat of its asperity, by politeness and refinement; a sense of honour, which is a stronger, more constant, and more governable principle, acquires fresh vigour by that elevation of genius which arises from knowledge and a good education. Add to this, that courage can neither have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people. The ancients remarked, that DATAMES was the only barbarian that ever knew the art of war.<sup>6</sup> And PYRRHUS, seeing the ROMANS marshal their army with some art and skill, said with surprize, *These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline!*<sup>7</sup> It is observable, that, as the old ROMANS, by applying themselves solely to war, were almost the only uncivilized people that ever possessed military dis-

6. [Datames was a Persian commander and satrap who led a rebellion against Artaxerxes II around 362 B.C. He is praised by Cornelius Nepos (100?–24? B.C.) as the bravest and most prudent of all the barbarian commanders, except for the two Carthaginians Hamilcar and Hannibal. See *De Viris Illustribus* (Lives of illustrious men), in the life of Datames.]

7. [Pyrrhus, the greatest king of Epirus (the “mainland” north and west of Greece, in present-day Albania), fought against the Romans between 280 and 275 B.C. The statement quoted by Hume was made before the battle of Heraclea. See Plutarch, *Lives*, in the life of Pyrrhus, sec. 16. After winning the battle at high cost, Pyrrhus remarked, “If I win a victory in one more battle with the Romans, I shall not have left a single soldier of those who crossed over with me” (Diodorus, *Library of History* 22.6.2; Loeb translation by Francis R. Walton). Hence the phrase *Pyrrhic victory*.]

cipline; so the modern ITALIANS are the only civilized people, among EUROPEANS, that ever wanted courage and a martial spirit. Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the ITALIANS to their luxury, or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the FRENCH and ENGLISH, whose bravery is as uncontestable, as their love for the arts, and their assiduity in commerce. The ITALIAN historians give us a more satisfactory reason for this degeneracy of their countrymen. They shew us how the sword was dropped at once by all the ITALIAN sovereigns; while the VENETIAN aristocracy was jealous of its subjects, the FLORENTINE democracy applied itself entirely to commerce; ROME was governed by priests, and NAPLES by women. War then became the business of soldiers of fortune, who spared one another, and to the astonishment of the world, could engage a whole day in what they called a battle, and return at night to their camp, without the least bloodshed.

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient ROME, which, joining, to its poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprizing height of grandeur and liberty; but having learned from its conquered provinces the ASIATIC luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; whence arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the LATIN classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East: Insomuch that SALLUST represents a taste for painting as a vice, no less than lewdness and drinking. And so popular were these sentiments, during the later ages of the republic, that this author abounds in praises of the old rigid ROMAN virtue, though himself the most egregious instance of modern luxury and corruption; speaks contemptuously of the GRECIAN eloquence, though the most elegant writer in the world; nay, employs preposterous digressions and declamations to this purpose, though a model of taste and correctness.<sup>8</sup>

But it would be easy to prove, that these writers mistook the cause of

8. [See Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, secs. 6–12. Sallust took advantage of his position as provincial governor of Nova Africa to amass great riches, and he escaped prosecution only by bribery. After retiring to his luxurious gardens in Rome to write history, he admitted in his works that he had once been driven to vice by ambition.]

the disorders in the ROMAN state, and ascribed to luxury and the arts, what really proceeded from an ill modelled government, and the unlimited extent of conquests. Refinement on the pleasures and conveniencies of life has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption. The value, which all men put upon any particular pleasure, depends on comparison and experience; nor is a porter less greedy of money, which he spends on bacon and brandy, than a courtier, who purchases champagne and ortolans. Riches are valuable at all times, and to all men; because they always purchase pleasures, such as men are accustomed to, and desire: Nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money, but a sense of honour and virtue; which, if it be not nearly equal at all times, will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement.

Of all EUROPEAN kingdoms, POLAND seems the most defective in the arts of war as well as peace, mechanical as well as liberal; yet it is there that venality and corruption do most prevail. The nobles seem to have preserved their crown elective for no other purpose, than regularly to sell it to the highest bidder. This is almost the only species of commerce, with which that people are acquainted.

The liberties of ENGLAND, so far from decaying since the improvements in the arts, have never flourished so much as during that period. And though corruption may seem to encrease of late years; this is chiefly to be ascribed to our established liberty, when our princes have found the impossibility of governing without parliaments, or of terrifying parliaments by the phantom of prerogative.<sup>9</sup> Not to mention, that this corruption or venality prevails much more among the electors than the elected; and therefore cannot justly be ascribed to any refinements in luxury.

If we consider the matter in a proper light, we shall find, that a progress in the arts is rather favourable to liberty, and has a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. In rude unpolished nations, where the arts are neglected, all labour is bestowed on the culti-

9. [Prerogative refers to the executive powers of the Crown and, more broadly, to its supposed right even to disobey the law if this is required for the public safety. The royal prerogative was brought under parliamentary control by constitutional developments of the seventeenth century.]

vation of the ground; and the whole society is divided into two classes, proprietors of land, and their vassals or tenants. The latter are necessarily dependent, and fitted for slavery and subjection; especially where they possess no riches, and are not valued for their knowledge in agriculture; as must always be the case where the arts are neglected. The former naturally erect themselves into petty tyrants; and must either submit to an absolute master, for the sake of peace and order; or if they will preserve their independency, like the ancient barons, they must fall into feuds and contests among themselves, and throw the whole society into such confusion, as is perhaps worse than the most despotic government. But where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may secure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.

The lower house is the support of our popular government; and all the world acknowledges, that it owed its chief influence and consideration to the encrease of commerce, which threw such a balance of property into the hands of the commons. How inconsistent then is it to blame so violently a refinement in the arts, and to represent it as the bane of liberty and public spirit!

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature: And as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgments pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is that at present we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived, by comparing different nations that are contemporaries; where we both judge more impartially, and can better set in opposition those manners, with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized



ages; and by the refined GREEKS and ROMANS were ascribed to all the barbarous nations, which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors, so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtue, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An ancient FRANK or SAXON may be highly extolled: But I believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a MOOR or TARTAR, than in those of a FRENCH or ENGLISH gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

We come now to the *second* position which we proposed to illustrate, to wit, that, as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and conveniencies of life, is advantageous to the public; so wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though, perhaps, not the most pernicious, to political society.

Let us consider what we call vicious luxury. No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A gratification is only vicious, when it engrosses all a man's expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune. Suppose, that he correct the vice, and employ part of his expence in the education of his children, in the support of his friends, and in relieving the poor; would any prejudice result to society? On the contrary, the same consumption would arise; and that labour, which, at present, is employed only in producing a slender gratification to one man, would relieve the necessitous, and bestow satisfaction on hundreds. The same care and toil that raise a dish of peas at CHRISTMAS, would give bread to a whole family during six months. To say, that, without a vicious luxury, the labour would not have been employed at all, is only to say, that there is some other defect in human nature, such as indolence, selfishness, inattention to others, for which luxury, in some measure, provides a remedy; as one poison may be an antidote to another. But virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected.

Suppose the same number of men, that are at present in GREAT BRITAIN, with the same soil and climate; I ask, is it not possible for

them to be happier, by the most perfect way of life that can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation that Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition? To assert, that they cannot, appears evidently ridiculous. As the land is able to maintain more than all its present inhabitants, they could never, in such a UTOPIAN state, feel any other ills than those which arise from bodily sickness; and these are not the half of human miseries. All other ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow. You must only take care to remove all the vices. If you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing *vicious* luxury, without curing sloth and an indifference to others, you only diminish industry in the state, and add nothing to men's charity or their generosity. Let us, therefore, rest contented with asserting, that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone; but let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public?<sup>10</sup> And indeed it seems upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.

I thought this reasoning necessary, in order to give some light to a philosophical question, which has been much disputed in ENGLAND. I call it a *philosophical* question, not a *political* one. For whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice; this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice by another; and in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society. Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills; but is in general preferable to sloth and

10. Fable of the Bees. [Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733), *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1714; enlarged editions in 1723 and 1728–29). See especially the section entitled “An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue.”]

idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more hurtful both to private persons and to the public. When sloth reigns, a mean uncultivated way of life prevails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment. And if the sovereign, in such a situation, demands the service of his subjects, the labour of the state suffices only to furnish the necessaries of life to the labourers, and can afford nothing to those who are employed in the public service.



*A View of the Manner in Which  
Trade and Civil Liberty  
Support Each Other*  
1756

NOT MUCH IS KNOWN about William Hazeland. It seems that he had a Master of Arts degree and that he was a schoolmaster in Middlesex. The writing reproduced here in its entirety was a prize-winning dissertation at Cambridge in 1755 and was read before the university. It offers an articulate example of the political implications that could be attributed to commerce at that time. It does not appear that Hazeland published any other works. His dates of birth and death are not known. The work was never reprinted, and the edition used is thus the original: *A View of the Manner in Which Trade and Civil Liberty Support Each Other* (London: Beecroft, 1756). All bracketed notes are by the present editor; the others are Hazeland's.

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## A View of the Manner in Which Trade and Civil Liberty Support Each Other

An established Liberty, and an extensive well-conducted Commerce, are the surest foundations, and most effectual means, of national happiness, that any political union of mankind can procure. The ancients, who knew how to value the former of these advantages, and enterprized the noblest designs for the support of their freedom, appear to have had but imperfect views of Trade; and not at all to have considered the very important influence that each of these principles hath on the other. So far from it, that a rigorous prohibition of all kinds of commercial intercourse with foreigners was among the fundamental maxims of one of their most famous republics. The defect of modern policy, as to this particular, seemeth to lie the other way. Most of the civilized nations of the world are now become attentive to the beneficial effects of commerce, and shew a disposition to neglect none of the advantages of their situation, and native commodities: but the spirit of Liberty is, in the mean time, suffered to languish and decline. We have lately seen an instance of a trading nation,<sup>1</sup> who, in order to promote their commercial views, took the rare expedient of delivering up the charter of their Liberties into the hands of the Sovereign: acting herein a direct counter-part to the *Spartan* institution, before noted. It must be a strange concurrence of accidents, that can give a prosperous turn to such narrow schemes of policy, as oppose, or even separate, the interests of Liberty and Trade. As long as things proceed in their ordinary course, the safety of both must consist in their union. Let each of them be pursued as an end independent of the other, they have perhaps an equal right to this distinction; and they will be found eventually to concur in affording each other the surest aid and support.

If this be the characteristic of our happy Administration, 'tis a glorious peculiarity, and will not fail to continue to the nation all the good effects that can arise from such causes; that is, in short, all the blessings

1. Denmark.

which a nation can enjoy. Our business is to enquire into the nature of this friendly coalition, and to point out the mutual assistance of Liberty and Commerce.

## I

'Tis a maxim which nothing but scepticism ever controverted, "That power must always follow property." Immense riches on the one hand, and on the other excessive indigence—what plainer indications of despotism and slavery? Who ever thought of so much as a legal establishment, where the Sovereign was the only proprietor? You must give the subject his *Focus* and *Penates*,<sup>2</sup> something that he may call his own, before he can be inspired with a zeal for his country, or can understand a constitution. In the states of old, wherein land was the only source of wealth, the *Agrarian law* was ever the favorite object of the republican party, as the firmest support of civil freedom. The share which the subjects can command of the national stock, will hold a due proportion to their weight in the balance of power.

But it is not only relative, but absolute poverty, that is inauspicious to Liberty. In the *Roman* republic, by virtue of the *Valerian law*,<sup>3</sup> the right of electing magistrates by the votes of the tribes and the tribunitian authority,<sup>4</sup> the supreme power was actually vested in the people. And yet their wretched indigence produced such a dependence, as obliged the brave spirits of the Plebeians to yield to an usurped Oligarchy, the power which the constitution gave themselves; and to maintain, for more than two centuries, an unsuccessful struggle with slavery, at the time they were nominally possessed of freedom. The establishment of a military stipend at length relieved the poor husbandmen from the necessity of

2. [I.e., Hearth and household gods.]

3. [Lucius Valerius Poplicola Potitus, consul with Horatius Barbatus in 449 B.C., when (according to Livy 3.55.3 ff.) these laws took effect.]

4. The Aristocratical institution of the centuries is no objection to what is here asserted. For as the *Comitia Tributa* were still allowed, after that other usage took place, that is as much as the present argument requires.

mortgaging their estates; and a flow of foreign success, particularly the important conquest of *Veii*,<sup>5</sup> having enriched, in some measure, every citizen; they grew easy in their fortunes, felt their independency, and pushed every advantage of their form of government. The state took its natural turn; the prize of honour and power became open to the merit of every competitor, Plebeians filled the exalted stations of Consul and Dictator, and would not be denied the Praetor's Chair and Augur's Staff.

Wealth in the subject, then, is the natural poize against arbitrary power in the state; a weight which, as it prevails, will forever draw and incline the revolving constitution, till it settle at the centre of Liberty. But Wealth is the peculiar gift of Trade: an art invented to relieve the distresses of mankind, that operates by producing all kinds of affluence, and whose certain effect is riches. And, what is most to the present purpose, its benefits are immediately conferred on the industrious, who are the more indigent part of every community. Among these it erects a monied interest, a new species of property intirely its own creation, that lifts the humble vassal within sight of his haughty lord, and, by dispersing among numbers the means of power, gives the people a taste and an ability to be free. Meanwhile the Great take no alarm at this growing rival, but pleased with those refinements and elegancies of fashionable life, introduced by Trade, and enriched by it in their turn, thro' the increase of their rents, which must ensue on the improvement of native commodities, they encourage and support the friend of Liberty, which in the end must prove fatal to their power. For Liberty makes its advances no less after Trade is become a general concern, after the government and governed are alike in its interest, than during the first steps of its progress. In that former period, the basis of freedom is laid, by the removal of absolute indigence; in the latter, that vast disproportion of property is corrected, which hinders the superstructure. For a continual addition of wealth, communicated alike thro' all the various stations of civil life, must hasten the several heaps to a level; must bring the fortunes of fellow citizens towards that unattainable limit of equality near which all the safe-guards of freedom lie.

1. It is here obvious to remark, how much better calculated for the in-

5. [Southernmost of the great Etruscan cities, it is 16 km. north of Rome.]

terests of freedom this commercial arithmetic of multiplication is, that regulates the national property, by increasing every particular person's share, than that *Agrarian* division, projected by the ancients to serve the same purpose. For, supposing both of these to be means equally effectual, the latter, which does violence to the possessions of all the most powerful men in the state, can never be brought about but by a military force, which is the least eligible of all revolutions. Whereas commerce works its effect by the most peaceful, popular, and beneficial methods, and, as we have seen before, will naturally obtain and avail itself of the patronage of the Great. Let it be added, that the *Agrarian law*, by removing all the rewards of industry and application, must produce a general idleness and inactivity; an event which will inevitably beggar the public, and thereby expose its liberties to the danger of a foreign conquest, at the same time that such a depravity of manners furnishes the fairest occasion to domestic usurpation: While Commerce sufficiently precludes the avenues of both. For by its vast augmentation of the national wealth, and by means of the number of laborious hands it employs, that are always ready to be turn'd to the public service, it affords the surest barrier against hostilities from abroad; and it is also vitally concerned to nourish and support an habit of industry, a disposition the most tenacious of its rights and jealous of tyranny.

2. This effect of Commerce, which we have been considering, will likewise furnish a very strong objection against a method which still prevails in the conduct of Trade, tho' its other disadvantages be notorious; I mean the custom of erecting companies of merchants, indulged with exclusive privileges. Such monopolies, by confining within a few hands the vast profits of an extensive Trade, must tend to destroy that equilibrium of property, which Commerce is particularly circumstanced for promoting. Which is more especially a grievance, because, as that enormous wealth is amass'd only in consequence of the exclusive power, with which these societies are arm'd by the Government, they will probably be ready, on all emergencies, to unhoard their immense treasures in behalf of their supporters: so that, under this management, Trade becomes a dangerous engine of State-policy, directly pointed against Liberty.

Such establishments are in the monied interest something like those *Gothic* institutions in the property of land which prevail in most parts of



*Europe*: by which a large inheritance is confined to a succession of single heirs, exclusive perhaps of a numerous race of relations, who are thereby left destitute and dependent on the great Lord of the family. While a free and open Trade, like a *Kentish* yeomanry, distributing the patrimony alike among all its children, enriches a whole posterity, and gives none of them an opportunity to oppress and ruin the rest. For no sooner are the profits arising from any particular branch of Trade become excessive, but the vigilant Spirit of Emulation puts forth a number of competitors to share the Golden fleece. The contest for gain is as warm as for glory. Diligence, skill, and oeconomy, the whole militia of Trade, are all exerted to the utmost; and, by cutting into many different chanel the overflowing stream of wealth, the torrent soon subsides within its proper bounds.

It hath been hinted already, that the manners introduced by Trade are a considerable furtherance of Liberty. I would place in this view, that general improvement in the arts of life, that refinement in the public taste and sentiments, in short all those intellectual and moral acquirements that are duly to be ascribed to Commerce. The contrast between civil life, in that degree of perfection to which it is carried in some countries, and the unenlightened rudeness of human society, before it had learnt the use of laws and government, is too violent to give pleasure by the description. The opposition is not much less glaring of civil society uncultivated by Commerce (if such a state be indeed supposeable) when set against the improved condition of mankind, where Trade has flourished. That wide experience of men and things which this affords, that active enterprising spirit which it cherishes, those encouragements of genius and invention that are proposed by it, have changed ignorance, barbarity, and inhospitable distrust into mutual confidence, arts and humanity; have given rise to all that is useful and ornamental in human nature. For a proof of this let us recur to the history of the *Egyptians* and *Phoenicians*, the most ancient trading nations upon record, who are likewise honor'd by their posterity as the sacred fountains whence all kinds of knowledge and civility were at first derived. Now after the views of mankind have been thus enlarged, when arts are become common, and science is far advanced; is it unnatural to imagine, that the theory of government would at length come to be considered, and sooner or later, as occasions were favourable or adverse, the forms of it be corrected and im-

proved? In fact, the *Grecians*, the most faithful disciples of *Egypt* and *Phoenicia* in the liberal arts, tho' not equally adepts in Trade, no sooner became famous for those accomplishments, than their monarchies began to totter, and they exhibited in their several states more models of a free-government than have since appeared in the world.

Thus the progression of these internal effects of Trade, towards that last and greatest of mental improvements, a true political knowledge and sense of Liberty, is analogous to the order of its external operations before considered. For as it was there seen to create and dispense an affluence of fortune, even to those inconsiderable members of a community to whom property was a thing unknown; so here, in like manner, it raises, enlarges, and opens the stock of intellectual treasure, calls forth sentiments that had never been felt, and virtues that had no objects. And as in the former case the great accession of wealth to the indigent, that is of power to the weak, brings down that extravagant superiority, which supported the throne of despotism, and riveted the chains of slavery; so, in the latter, when the light of knowledge and experience is risen in the mind, it shines thro' that antient veil, the thin texture of prejudice and superstition, that had sanctified establish'd forms, and made kings revered as gods. In short, both conspiring to the same mighty end, the one of these means only strengthens the hand to execute, what the other moves the heart to wish, and teaches the head to design.

Here then I shall rest the first part of our enquiry. For it is presumed, that the manner in which Trade promotes Liberty is that we have been describing: namely, by the production of a monied interest, which emancipates the meaner people from their subjection to the land-owners, who are otherwise their natural masters: and, by giving rise to that refinement in manners, which would at length bring men acquainted with the true nature of civil government, and the desireableness of civil freedom.

## II

Let us now turn to the other side of the prospect, and see what are those circumstances, in the nature of a free-government, that render it particularly advantageous to Commerce.

1. And here the first object that strikes us is, that *security of property* which the laws of such a state afford its subjects. In an absolute monarchy it is commonly unsafe to be rich. The exigencies of state, or the caprice of power, will too often induce the Sovereign, whose will is uncontrollable, to catch at the readiest means of raising supplies, which is, by seizing wealth where it may be found already amassed. And whether this be claimed, together with the person of the owner, by a furious *Lettre de cachet*,<sup>6</sup> or asked on the insidious pretext of a loan, it is an hardship equally felt and apprehended. Whether the sternness of a *Turkish Basha*,<sup>6</sup> or the address of a *French* Comptroller of Finances, be the guise of the executioner, the stroke is equally fatal to Commercial industry—Sensible of the ill effect such precedents must ever have upon Trade, the wisest Monarchs have practised all the arts of persuasion, to quiet the fears and suspicions of this useful stranger, and have courted her stay by numberless grants and immunities. Their delusions have sometimes succeeded. But, however the watchful, jealous look, which Trade is observed to wear in such Governments, shews, that she considers herself all the while in an enemy's country, ready to withdraw upon any sudden alarm. What numbers of Merchants and Manufacturers left their settlements in the *Netherlands*, on account of the tyrannous exactions of *Philip* the Second, to take refuge under the milder auspices of a *British* Government! And in a later period, how was *France* depopulated of its ingenious artists, by the persecutions of *Lewis* the Fourteenth! Instances of this sort are unknown to a state where the Prerogative is restrained by law; where, if the meanest subject feel the hand of oppression, the whole power of the constitution is prepared to do him right. Now, as the safe and quiet enjoyment of his accumulated wealth must be supposed the principal end and reward that encourages the Merchant to dare the hazards and expense of Trade, it may be concluded, that the Government wherein this is best secured, must naturally be the seat of Traffic.

2. In the next place, that equable distribution of property, which is necessary to a free government, but inconsistent with the more absolute forms, will be found no inconsiderable advantage to Trade. Whatever we suppose to be the state of arts and refinement in a nation, it is probable

6. [A high Ottoman official, similar to a provincial governor; also spelled "Pasha."]

that there will be greater expense, a larger consumption of the subjects of Commerce, where the fortunes of men are nearly upon a level, than if they were exceedingly disproportionate. Every man, in that case, is possessed of a competency, will have some little taste for what is convenient, and may give encouragement by his demands to several branches of Trade. And the men of fashion and figure, whose more enlarged desires require a more expensive gratification, will form a very considerable part of the community. But where the whole people are rich or poor to an extreme, exceedingly the greater part must confine their wants to the bare supply of nature, and that at the cheapest rate she can be served. Buying and selling enter but little into their concerns. They must prepare their own food, and make their own cloathing. Their houses are built, furnished, and inhabited by the same persons. If you suppose that the aggregate of wealth, which is possessed by the Grandees, and scattered by them on a refined luxury, will make up the other's defect, it is certainly a mistake. For wherever this immense disparity of condition subsists, the national wealth will always be less, than in consequence of a more uniform dispersion. When all the laborious part of a people are slaves, or hirelings, it is folly to expect the same increase, as if every little field was cultivated by its proper owner, who should himself receive the fruits of his own industry. There is not, therefore, the same foundation for expense under such an arbitrary dispensation, neither are there the same motives and occasions to call it forth. For greatness is always retired and unsociable. The men of exalted stations in despotic governments seldom meet with their equals, do not mix so frequently in public assemblies, or join in that familiar intercourse of amusement and conversation, so common with the moderate quality of more equal Governments. So that the active principle of emulation, which is excited by comparison, and continually prompts these to refinement and novelty in all the articles of expense, operates but weakly on those, who, notwithstanding the encomiums of flatterers and dependents on their splendor and magnificence, are never sumptuous, in proportion to their estates, to the same degree as their inferiors. Now it is the great home-consumption of their several manufactures which gives rise, in any country, to the particular arts of Trade. Where this demand is slackened and abated, less attention will be given to those pursuits, fewer people will care to be initiated in such

mysteries; and consequently there will not be kept up<sup>7</sup> that emulous struggle, those perpetual trials of skill among artificers, which are necessary to bring their works to any degree of perfection.

The cause under consideration operates yet another way, to the benefit of Trade. For, by means of the modest inequality in the fortunes of free-citizens, the mercantile part of a nation will be left in possession of greater portions of wealth than can fall to the share of numbers, where the sceptre of Monarchy is wielded. This will enable them to maintain more extensive manufactories, and to pursue useful inventions; enterprising spirits will not here be deterr'd from any hopeful experiments, by the dread of ruin in case of failure. And, which is no immaterial point, their larger stocks will allow them to be content with smaller profits than will satisfy their less opulent rivals. Now in absolute governments, the men of fortune are all men of family. These will be afraid of degrading themselves by an application to Commerce. Their high blood would be polluted by such mean mechanical industry. And their poor vassals, who have no such restraints, are in too abject a condition to be capable of carrying on any work of difficulty and expense. In consequence of this, the rich will always find their native manufactures but miserable, imperfect attempts, compared with those of more expert foreigners. These therefore will be purchased at any rate, to the entire discouragement and destruction of the Trade at home. And as this character will extend to almost every thing that is exquisite in the manual arts, and which respects

7. The effect of this generous strife is beautifully described by *Hesiod*.

Ἦτε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὁμῶς ἐπὶ ἐργον ἔγειρεν.

Εἰς ἕτερον γάρ τις τε ἰδὼν ἔργοιο χατίζων

Πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρώμεναι ἡδὲ φυτεύειν

Οἶκόν τ' εὖ θέσθαι· ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων

Εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ'· ἀγαθὴ δ' Ἔρις ἦδε βροτοῖσιν.

Καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,

Καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ αἰοιδὸς αἰοιδῷ.

Ἔργα καὶ Ἥμερ.

[“For any one when idle having looked upon another being rich, he, I say, makes haste to plough and to plant, and well to order his house; for neighbour rivals neighbour, when hastening toward riches; but this contention is good for mortals. Both potter is jealous of potter, and craftsman of craftsman; and poor man has a grudge against poor man, and poet against poet.” “Works and Days,” in *The Works of Hesiod, Callimachus, and Theognis*, trans. James Davies Banks (London: Bohn’s Classical Library, 1889), 74–75 (ll. 20–26).]

the gratifications of refined and polite life; the state is hereby deprived of all the ingenious labor that should supply this demand, and must pay for its costly elegancies in ready cash or unwrought materials, directly against the balance of Trade. This ruinous inversion of exchange, (which, according to the happy expression of a celebrated writer, is a Commerce of luxury, not of oeconomy)<sup>8</sup> is remarkably exemplified in *Poland*. An instance not to be passed over, as being particularly adapted to ascertain the principles, and confirm the reasoning used on this head. For the government of this nation is absolute even to despotism. The Nobility, tho' almost entire masters of the national property, are observed to live in less splendor than in the more moderate courts of *Europe*. The bulk of the people are immersed in the deepest poverty and slavery. They have hardly any sort of manufactures of their own workmanship; and corn, which is their only staple commodity, brings no return of gain into the state, but barely counterpoises the heavy account of their foreign expenses.

3. Let it be remembered, as a further advantage which Trade derives from a free government, that Republics have always been observed to be more populous than Monarchies. This fact is verified by the experience of all ages, and holds true, not only in commercial states, wherein other causes may have concurred to increase the number of inhabitants; but was remarkably seen in the *Spartan* commonwealth of old, and the *Swiss* cantons of modern times. These are perhaps the only examples of republics that have supported themselves without the aids of Trade. And they are no less remarkable for their populousness; the former having sent forth more colonies than any other city of *Greece*, and the latter at this day furnishing all *Europe* with artificers, soldiers, and servants. This prolific quality is perhaps no more than a consequence of those two circumstances in the nature of a free government before insisted on. For where *property is so fairly distributed*, it is certain that a greater number of persons may be maintained out of the same fund, than upon any other supposition. If the balance preponderate on one side with a barren superfluity, it must leave in the other scale a wretched deficiency, that cuts off the prospects of many, and the support of more. But when to *the possession*

8. [See Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, bk. 20, ch. 4, 5, 8, 10; see chapter 20 above.]

of a competency there is added *the assurance* of preserving it ourselves, and transmitting it to our posterity, what impediment shall interpose to prevent the closing of the *Hymeneal* tie? When conjugal ease and peace is thus secured, what should hinder the social appetite from operating to its full extent? It is true the happiness of mankind is but very imperfectly defined from external circumstances; as being principally influenced by the prevailing sentiments, manners, and habits of thinking. So that this principle may appear too precarious, to be the sole foundation of so important a conclusion. But this matter, tho' curious, would detain us too long by a further disquisition. It is enough, that the truth of the fact is beyond dispute. I shall briefly consider one or two of its consequences, as they appear to affect the growth of Trade. *First*, It is evident that populousness must increase the natural consumption of commodities and manufactures: not merely in proportion to the augmentation of people, but infinitely beyond this, from the influence of fashion, which subsists and flourishes by means of well frequented neighbourhoods, and by enlarging the sphere of our wants, gives encouragement to every kind of artificial productions. *Secondly*, It furnishes a constant supply of hands to be employed in all the numberless exigencies of Commerce. It is to be supposed, that the Tradesmen, in every country, originally consisted of such persons as, having no property in land, and being too numerous to find employment in agriculture, or the raising of commodities, made themselves necessary to the others, by their ingenious contrivances to alter and apply to various uses the effects of nature, that is, by the invention of manufactures. Now if it happen that the number of inhabitants in the same place be increased according to any rate, the number of this sort of men, who are at leisure to prosecute the arts of Trade, will be augmented in a much higher proportion. For there is no need of supposing the land-owners to be at all more numerous after this change. And tho' a larger quantity of commodities must be raised by the husbandmen, to supply the increasing consumption; yet the labor of a very few additional hands, thus employed, will be sufficient to answer the necessities of many. So that the bulk of this swarm of new people must fall into the division of Traders. In large and long-established governments, where it is not so easy to estimate the comparative increase of the several orders, the same causes still subsisting, must produce the same variations. So that

wherever the people are very numerous in proportion to the extent of their territory, there will always be a store of vacant hands that will naturally addict<sup>o</sup> themselves to every sort of commercial industry. Want will oblige them to exert their faculties, and emulation will prompt them to excell. Here then will be found the greatest abundance, and the greatest perfection of rare manufactures. This is the glory of Trade. For it lays up for the public an exhaustless stock of useful labor, and gives an universal value to the works of its artists, which renders them real treasure to the possessors. *Lastly*, It prevents an excessive growth in the price of labor, which is the gauge that must regulate the profits of all foreign Trade. When by a great overbalance, the quantity of current coin in a nation is considerably augmented, it is a common, tho' by no means a necessary consequence, that the prices of labor, and other commodities, should be enhanced. Thus the Merchants of poorer countries are enabled to undersell the rich at all foreign markets, and, in the end, to ruin their Trade. But an increase of mechanical hands, proportioned to the increasing species, will prevent this mischief. For were the money which circulates in any of the chanel of Trade doubled, trebled, or quadrupled, if the labor which is respectively employed in the several manufactures belonging to those kinds be also augmented in like manner, there will remain the same proportion as before between money and wares, which is the only circumstance which determines their price. Was it never known, when the great profits and increasing demands that have been made of any particular manufacture had tempted too great a number of adventurers to engage therein, that, the quantity of goods produced being too great for the vent, the prices of them, and of the several sorts of labor employed in preparing them, have been so far from rising, that they have *sunk*? But no more of this; for the subject of populousness would require a fuller exposition than can here be attempted.

Let it suffice, then, that we have discovered three several branches in which the ingrafted interest of Trade grows up, and flourishes on the stem of Liberty. Forasmuch as by *populousness*, and by a *similarity of fortunes*, which are the genuine produce of Freedom, Commerce is created, improved and perfected; and by the establishment of *Laws above the contrroll of Prerogative*,<sup>o</sup> which constitutes the very being of Freedom, the fruits and acquirements of Commerce are secured to their owners.



After this review of the connection and happy correspondence subsisting between the effects of these two potent principles, which have been the subject of our enquiry, we can no longer ascribe it to chance, that *Venice*, *Genoa*, *England* and *Holland* have been the chief trading nations in modern history; but are left to wonder, even with astonishment, that *Spain* and *Portugal* should still be found playing with the chains of arbitrary power, and *France* in vain struggling to break them.



## *The Commercial Nobility*

1756

GABRIEL FRANÇOIS, *abbé* Coyer, was a French man of letters and worldly cleric born in 1707. He entered the Society of Jesus, studying humanities and philosophy until he left the order in 1736. He then became private tutor to the young Duke of Bouillon (Prince of Turenne at the time) in 1741. There followed public functions that saw him in attendance at some battles of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48). His many works include a history of the Polish king Jan Sobieski, travel accounts of Holland and Italy, a study of ancient religions, *belles-lettres*, and a popular attack on the guild system, *Chinki*. He became a member of the Royal Academy of England and the Academy of Nancy. It is said that when he visited Voltaire at Ferney and announced his desire to return each year for three months, Voltaire replied that whereas Don Quixote had mistaken inns for castles, Coyer was mistaking castles for inns. He died in 1782.

The excerpt here is from his controversial tract *La Noblesse commerçante* (London: Duchesne, 1756), which precipitated a huge pamphlet war on the question of whether the legal impediments to noblemen engaging in trade should be lifted. This excerpt provides Coyer's treatment of the question of the basic honor of the activity of commerce. Unbracketed notes are by the author, bracketed ones by the present editor.

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## The Commercial Nobility

If I only had to address reason to open trade to the nobility, soon all its doors would be wide open to them. But one must again deal with prejudices; it is they which rule the world. Czar Peter [r. 1697–1725] had more trouble getting the Muscovites to cut their beards than turning them into men. However, there are prejudices we have overcome, which is a reason for hope. We no longer believe, as our ancestors did, that dissecting the human body is a sacrilege, or that a dead person who has not made a bequest to the Church should be refused burial. Our senators are no longer buried dressed as Cordeliers<sup>1</sup> in order to reach Heaven. Astrology has lost its credit; sorcerers have disappeared. Ghosts have become ridiculous, trial by combat has been abolished, and we have abandoned the judgment of God by ordeal of fire and water. I have mentioned these religious prejudices because they are very difficult to subdue; victory is sweet. Here are other laurels: The nobles themselves, so attached to the errors gratifying their nobility, have cast off many of them. They no longer pride themselves on their ignorance; they have abandoned the closed space,<sup>2</sup> and our multicolored knights no longer roam the world fighting for their ladies.

Still, let us listen to Prejudice. He would have something to complain about if one condemned him without listening to him: *“the honor of the nobility is highly delicate, wouldn’t trade be an offence against it?”*

This honor, however delicate it may be, is clad in the livery of the great nobles, serves in their stables or in their antechambers; a title of Page or Stable boy puts a veneer on those functions performed by servants. If only words are needed to dignify trade in the eyes of the nobility, our language will provide some, and all the more easily in that trade has nothing servile about it; it depends on only the state and itself.

Neither the Marquis of Lassay nor the President of Montesquieu has ever suggested that trade dishonors the nobility.<sup>3</sup> Such language would

1. [A branch of Franciscan friars.]

2. [I.e., of the tournament.]

3. [Armand de Madaillan de Lesparre, Marquis de Lassay (1652–1738), “Réflexions de M. le Marquis de Lassé [sic], mort en 1738,” in *Mercure de France*, vol. 2, Dec. 1754, and Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, bk. 20, ch. 21; in chapter 20 in this volume.]

have dishonored them. Who does hold this view? The Great, on whom fortune always smiles, and who hardly bother if others cry; frivolous souls, who take image for substance, titles and vanity for honor. Who else? Wandering knights, better known these days for their industry than for their prowess, and who are a useless and often dangerous burden to the families they frequent. Let us compare them with Messrs. *Rousseau and Paignan* from Sedan, with Mr. *Julienne* from Paris, active citizens whose fortunes make the fortunes of so many others, and who nourish the arts as well as men. On which side are honor, decency, substance, dignity, true nobility? Here is something I acknowledge: As long as games, pleasures, fantastic expenditures, pomp, and uselessness maintain an air of nobility about them, commerce will not adopt them. If it plays, it does so after hard work. If it indulges in pleasure, it does so after privation. If it spends, it does so wisely. If it gives, it has paid its debts. If it summons the delights of the arts in its house, its family has plenty to live on, and the worker [*ouvrier*] does not wait for his wage. Finally, if it displays magnificence, neither the People nor the Great can reproach it because it is neither nourished by injustice nor inflated by pomp. As far as uselessness is concerned, it wants nothing to do with this idol of good company.

Prejudice is going to dig in the remnants of Antiquity, and shake its powder on Trade to tarnish it. *Egyptians, Jews, several Greek Republics and the Romans despised Commerce*, or so it says. Heavens! If we wanted to mimick the Ancients in everything, we would do some wonderful things! We would marry our sisters as in Egypt; we would repudiate and stone our wives to death as in Judea; we would make them common property as in Sparta; we would expose and kill our deformed children together with our youngest daughters as in early Rome; we would cut an insolvent debtor to pieces.

But is it truly proven that the Ancients regarded commerce with contempt? Because of its religion and morals, Egypt first broke off all communication with foreigners. Judea too made up a separate people. All the earth was profane for an Egyptian and a Jew, who in turn were profane to one another. But this zeal did not hold out very long against the advantages of commerce. Eventually, the navies of both nations were fighting over the riches of Africa and Asia. As for the Greeks, it is true that Sparta relegated trade to the slaves, an affront that commerce shared with agriculture and the fine arts. But I can find Greeks opposed to

Greeks. Athens and Corinth yielded nothing to Sparta in their valuation of things and in their respect for the proprieties; both shone in their trade. And if Rome neglected trade as long as she was busy breaking scepters and spilling the blood of nations, she embraced it as soon as she could breathe again. Blissful Arabia attracted Roman citizens.<sup>4</sup> This “king-people” became a “merchant-people”; a hundred and twenty Ships sailed annually to the Indies, returning loaded with merchandise worth up to fifty million Sesterces.<sup>5</sup>

Let no one object that the Claudian law forbade patricians to trade, as if it were indecent. Surely I would not advise our senators to join together the balance of trade with that of justice; they are busy maintaining public order. But here is what I would say to this subordinate group of people who constantly strive to forge weapons for petty quarrels, and who only survive by devouring the citizenry: Enrich yourselves [*Enrichissez-vous*] and do some good for the state through honest means—engage in trade! Neither will I preach to our soldiers, who have already put their courage to the test, or whose courage will be put to the test by propitious circumstances, to renounce the sword for trade. But I will urge that nobility which is even larger, and which is condemned to idleness by misfortunes, to associate themselves with the fortunes and labors of the merchants.

It is difficult getting to the bottom of the judgment of the Ancients on the dignity of commerce. The Romans for instance had a law which confounded female shopkeepers with slaves, innkeepers, and actresses;<sup>6</sup> another law gave the title of Roman citizen to a slave who had done a considerable trade for six years, in order to fill the warehouses of Rome.<sup>7</sup> This was to ennoble the slave because he had done something noble. So why condemn the woman who had a shop? When Cicero speaks of the “commerce of economy,” he does not like the fact that the same people should be at the same time the ruler and the factor of the universe.<sup>8</sup> And

4. Pliny [the Elder], Bk. 6, Ch. XXVIII.

5. Ibid., Ch. XXIII, & Strabo [*The Geography*], bk. 2.

6. Leg. 5, de naturalibus Liberis.

7. Ulpian, Sueton[ius], *De vita Caesarum*, in Claudi[us].

8. Nolo eundem populum Imperatorem & portitorem esse terrarum. [Montesquieu had cited the same passage in *Spirit of the Laws*, bk. 20, ch. 4; in chapter 20 in this volume.]

in another passage, he praises wholesale trade,<sup>9</sup> as if the commerce of economy did not offer just as worthy objects as the commerce of luxury. In this area, one should not take one's bearings from Rome in the time of Cicero; a City where people cared only about elections, campaigns and trials, a state which wanted only to dominate others through force of arms, was easily blind to the importance and dignity of trade.

In any discussion, it is essential to distinguish between times. There are times when the greatest geniuses do not look in a certain direction. Caesar and Charlemagne, dazzled by conquests, did not see commerce. And when circumstances change, different ideas emerge.

Among the Jews, David said: "Because I did not know trade, I shall be in the glory of God." Solomon—the wisest man of all—and the Holy King Josephat thought they could enter into the glory of God while sending merchant ships into the Red Sea. The prophet Ezechiel reproached the city of Tyre with having soiled itself through trade.<sup>10</sup> Isaiah ranks her above all cities—*It is the Queen of the Sea, whose merchants are princes, whose agents are the Great of the earth.*<sup>11</sup>

Early Christianity had Doctors who left commerce with the honorable reputation it had; others condemned it. Saint Chrysostomus, with anathema near at hand, decided without further ado that *a merchant can hardly, can never please God*; from which he concludes that no Christian should be a merchant, or if he wishes so, he should be cast out of the Temple.<sup>12</sup> If one had followed that piece of advice, Constantinople and the Saint himself would have died of starvation.

Among the Moderns, one finds no more harmony of sentiment. *Bodin*<sup>13</sup> and *Tiraqueau*<sup>14</sup> forbid the nobility to trade; *Baldus* urges them to do so as if it were something useful and proper.<sup>15</sup> If the question is

9. [Cicero], Bk. 1, de Officiis.

10. By the multitude of thy merchandise, thy inner parts were filled with iniquity. Ch. 28.

11. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, which was formerly crowned, whose merchants were princes, and her traders the nobles of the earth? Ch. 23.

12. In 2. part homil. in Matth. 21[:12].

13. Bk. 5 Reipubl[ica].

14. [André Tiraqueau (1480–1558), *Tractatus de nobilitate et jure primogeniorum* (1543),] Ch. 23.

15. [Baldus de Ubaldis (1327–1400)], In rubricis de Clericis peregrina.

submitted to Italy, to Denmark, to England, to Holland, the nobles themselves resolve it in favor of trade, whereas the Germans and the Polish cry foul. The Chevalier de la Roque,<sup>16</sup> who tells us about these conflicting opinions in a treatise which was written deliberately to ensure the honor and the prerogatives of the nobility, declares himself highly in favor of involving them in trade.

French nobles, dare to think on your own! Or if you want others to decide for you, decide according to the facts. *Solon* was as worthy as a nobleman from Beauce or Picardie. He was the descendant of Codrus, the last king of Athens, and before giving laws to the Athenians, he regained his fortune through trade.<sup>17</sup> Plutarch says,<sup>18</sup> “in those times, there was no handywork which was shameful, no art, no trade which caused divisions among men; merchandise in particular was honorable because it opened trade with the barbaric nations, provided the means to strike friendships and alliances with kings, and taught innumerable things that would have been ignored without it.” I do not know if *Protus* had letters of nobility; this merchant dared to found Marseille, which has contributed to our wealth for so many centuries.<sup>19</sup> *Cato* the censor was certainly from a respectable family; Kings had implored him to protect them before he was even a consul. Besides, his scrupulous austerity as far as virtue and honor were concerned is well-known. As a matter of fact, he had increased his patrimony through commerce.<sup>20</sup> I will speak neither of *Hippocrates* the mathematician, nor of the wise *Thales*, nor of the divine *Plato*, all of whom engaged in trade.<sup>21</sup> It is not surprising that philosophers and wise men should have suspected nothing disgraceful in such an honorable occupation. But Rome comes back to mind and what do I see? *Pertinax*, you are engaging in commerce<sup>22</sup> and soon you shall carry the imperial crown! The emperor Caracalla had not done any trade, but he honored

16. [Gilles André de La Roque (1598–1686), *Le Traité de la noblesse* (Paris, 1678).]

17. Plutarch, [L]ife of Solon.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Plutarch, [L]ife of Cato.

21. Plutarch, [L]ife of Solon.

22. History of the Commerce [and Navigation] of the Ancients [1716], by M. [Pierre-Daniel] Huet, Ch. LVII.

merchants; he gave them a marked proof of this in the massacre of Alexandria: everybody—nobles, priests, magistrates, warriors—was put to the sword, but he spared the merchants.

Open the archives of the world and you will find that Trade was honored by all nations during their golden age [*beau siècle*]*—*in Egypt under Ptolemy Philadelphus, in Judea under Solomon, in Athens under Pericles, in Carthage under Hanno, in Florence under Cosimo de' Medici, in Great Britain under Elizabeth, in Holland under the banners of liberty, in Russia under Peter the Great. Your own nation, whose censure you unwisely fear, has been inviting you to engage in trade for a long time now.





*An Estimate of the Manners and  
Principles of the Times*  
1757

JOHN BROWN, the son of a parish priest, was born in 1715. He went to Cambridge in 1732, where he passed with distinction in 1735. He took orders shortly thereafter and was made a minor canon and lecturer. He defended the Whig cause both in the battle of Carlisle in 1745 and in published sermons, and he was made chaplain to the dean of York in 1747. In a eulogistic essay, he praised Pope's literary executor, Warburton, who then became a sort of literary patron to him. At Warburton's suggestion, he wrote an essay in 1751 on Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, which was later admired by Mill for its utilitarian bent; it went through five editions by 1764. He also wrote tragedies and works on music, poetry, dialogues, and literary histories, and he announced an eight-volume "Principles of Christian Legislation" that never appeared. Toward the end of his life, he was approached by advisers to Catherine II of Russia about establishing an educational system there. Catherine invited him to St. Petersburg; he prepared to go, but doctors and friends prevailed upon him to spare his fragile health the rigors of a Russian winter. On September 23, 1766, he committed suicide by cutting his own throat, an act feared by his friends for many years.

*An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757; 7th ed., London, 1758) was by far his most famous and popular work, going through seven editions in one year. Cowper says in his *Table-Talk*, "The

inestimable estimate of Brown / rose like a paper kite and charmed the town." All of part three is reproduced here. Unbracketed notes are by the author, bracketed ones by the editor.

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## An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times

### Part III. Of the Sources of these MANNERS and PRINCIPLES

#### Section I

##### *Of a general Mistake on this Subject*

The public Effects of our Manners and Principles here enumerated, begin now to appear too manifest in our public Miscarriages, to be any longer derided. The Nation stands aghast at it's own Misfortunes: But, like a Man starting suddenly from Sleep, by the Noise of some approaching Ruin, knows neither whence it comes, nor how to avoid it.

In Proof of this, we need only look into the late Instructions from Constituents to Representatives. These we see, seldom look farther than the immediate and incidental Occasion of each particular Misconduct: While the grand general Principles in which these Misconducts have been chiefly founded, are neither seen, nor suspected: Nay, an impartial Enquiry will probably convince us, that while they strike at the Shoots and Branches, they feed the Root from whence these Misconducts have been originally derived.

For it seems to be the ruling Maxim of this Age and Nation, that if our Trade and Wealth are but increased, we are powerful, happy, and secure: And in estimating the real Strength of the Kingdom, the sole Question for many Years hath been, "What Commerce and Riches the Nation is

possessed of?" A Question, which an ancient Lawgiver would have laughed at.

There never was a more fatal Error more greedily embraced by any People.

## Section II

### *Of the Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth on Manners*

By Wealth is understood, every kind of useful Possession; or Money, which is it's Sign, and may be converted into it.

By Commerce is understood the Exchange of Wealth, for mutual Benefit.

The Effects of Commerce on Manners have by most Writers, I think, been considered as *uniform*. Even the sage and amiable MONTESQUIEU says only, in general Terms, "That Commerce polishes Manners, but corrupts Manners."<sup>1</sup> Whereas, from a candid View of it's Nature and Effects, we shall probably find, that in it's first and middle Stages it is beneficent; in it's last, dangerous and fatal.

If we view Commerce in its first Stages, we shall see, that it supplies mutual Necessities, prevents mutual Wants, extends mutual Knowledge, eradicates mutual Prejudice, and spreads mutual Humanity.

If we view it in its middle and more advanced Period, we shall see, it provides Conveniencies, increaseth Numbers, coins Money, gives Birth to Arts and Science, creates equal Laws, diffuses general Plenty and general Happiness.

If we view it in it's third and highest Stage, we shall see it change it's Nature and Effects. It brings in Superfluity and vast Wealth; begets Avarice, gross Luxury, or effeminate Refinement among the higher Ranks, together with general Loss of Principle.

Concerning the two first Stages of Commerce, I shall have no Dispute with the present Times: Its Benefits are generally acknowledged. The dangerous Effects of it's Exorbitance or Excess have not yet been sufficiently developed.

1. L'Esprit des Loix, l. xx. c. 1. [See chapter 20 in this volume.]

That Commerce in it's Excess brings a general Superfluity of Goods, that this general Superfluity settles in particular Hands into vast Wealth, will be readily acknowledged.

The next Step is, to consider how vast Wealth naturally produces Avarice, Luxury, or Effeminacy, according to the Genius or Circumstances of the People among whom it comes.

Industry, in it's first Stages, is *frugal* not *ungenerous*: It's End being that of Self-Preservation and moderate Enjoyment, it's little Superfluities are often employed in Acts of Generosity and Beneficence. But the daily Increase of Wealth by Industry naturally increases the *Love* of Wealth. The Passion for Money, being founded, not in Sense, but Imagination, admits of no Satiety: like those which are called the natural Passions. Thus the Habit of saving Money, beyond every other Habit, gathers Strength by continued Gratification. The Attention of the whole Man is immediately turned upon it; and every other Pursuit held light when compared with the Increase of Wealth. Hence the natural Character of the Trader, when his final Prospect is the Acquisition of Wealth is that of *Industry* and *Avarice*.

What is true, in this Respect, of *trading Men*, is true of *trading Nations*. If their Commerce be that of Oeconomy in the Extreme, if the last Object of their Pursuit be Wealth for it's own Sake, if the Leaders of such a People be *commercial*, the Character of that People, and it's Leaders, will be found in *Industry* and *Avarice*. But if a trading Nation hath a large *Territory* sufficient to create a *Landed Interest*, Commerce will produce very different Effects. For as it multiplies Inhabitants, and brings in Wealth, it naturally increases the Value of landed Estates. Barren Grounds are cultivated, and cultivated Spots are made more fertile. Hence a vast Accession of Income to the Nobility and Gentry.

These Ranks of Men being not bred up to Habits of Industry; on the contrary, their increased Rents coming in unsought for, and their Time being often a Load upon them, thro' want of Capacity and Employment, the Habit of *Indulgence* comes on, and grows of Course. Additional Wealth gives the Power to gratify every Desire that rises, Leisure improves these Desires into Habits; thus Money is at length considered as no more than the Means of Gratification; and hence the genuine Character of a rich Nobility or Gentry, is that of Expence and Luxury.

But the first Essays of Luxury, like those of every other Art, are coarse and rude: The natural Character of Luxury, therefore, is to refine by Degrees: Especially, when assisted by Commerce, it advances apace into Refinement. For Commerce searches every Shore and Climate for it's Supplies; and Art is studious, because rewarded, in arranging and applying these Materials to the most exquisite and delicate Use. Thus every coarse Mode of Pleasure is by Degrees despised; new Habits of higher Indulgence come on: gross Luxury is banished, and Effeminacy takes it's Place.

But Luxury, in this *last* Period, being exhausted in it's Course; and turned, for want of new Objects of Indulgence, into Debility and Languor, would expire or sleep, were it not awakened by another Passion, which again calls it into Action. Nothing is so natural to effeminate Minds, as *Vanity*. This rouses the luxurious and debilitated Soul, and the Arts of pleasurable Enjoyment are now pushed to their highest Degree, by the Spirit of delicate Emulation.

Thus the whole Attention of the Mind is centred on *Brillancy* and *Indulgence*: Money, tho' despised as an *End*, is greedily sought as a *Means*: And *Self*, under a different Appearance from the trading Spirit, takes equal Possession of the Soul.

Thus as the Character of a State altogether commercial in the highest Degree, is that of Industry and Avarice; so, in a Nation of extended Territory, where Commerce is in it's highest Period, while its trading Members retain their Habits of Industry and Avarice, the natural Character of it's landed Ranks, it's Nobility and Gentry, is that of "a vain, luxurious, and selfish Effeminacy."

We speak here of the simple and proper Effects of Trade and Wealth, uncontroled by opposite Manners or Principles; which, it is to be observed, never existed probably, at least in the mixed State, in their full Extent: Individuals there are, and will be, in almost every State and Period, who are influenced by dissimilar Manners or Principles: There are Traders who are generous; Nobles and Gentry whose ultimate Passion is for Gold: But such Exceptions affect not the general Principle: And tho' these incidental Mixtures *Weaken* the different Colours of different Ranks or States, yet still the different Colours remain in their Nature distinct and invariable.

'Tis probable, the Reader will have discovered, that this Reasoning is strengthened by, or rather built upon, the Examples of two neighbour Nations; one wholly commercial, that of *Holland*: The other a mixed State, compounded of a commercial and landed Interest; I mean *our own*. And to say the Truth; no two Nations perhaps ever existed, which approached so near to the full and proper Effects of the Causes here alledged.

It will appear immediately why the Genius of the Republic of *Holland* is here annalysed into its first Principles; which are simply, those of Industry and the Love of Gain.

In the mean Time, we may justly conclude from this Argument, that the exorbitant Trade and Wealth of *England* sufficiently account for it's present *Effeminacy*.

### Section III

#### *Of the Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth on the religious Principle*

Such therefore are the ruling Manners which may naturally be expected in a Nation thus circumstanced, unless they be counteracted by opposite Principles: 'Tis now Time to consider the natural Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth, on all these salutary Principles by which these effeminate Manners can most effectually be controuled.

Let us still carry the two characteristic States of *Holland* and *England*, in our Eye. Whether, then, we view the commercial State, where the Love of Money rules; or the mixed State, where the Love of Money rules; or the mixed State, where vain Effeminacy predominates; we shall find both these national Characters have but a bad Aspect and Influence on every Kind of Principle. Let us first consider that of Religion.

Avarice seems not, in it's own Nature, prone to destroy *speculative* religious Belief; but effectually to extinguish *active* religious Principle.

It tends not to destroy speculative Belief, because this Effect must be a Work of Application, Time, and Labour: Now the Labour of Avarice is naturally bent on it's main Object, *Money*; therefore, to waste this Labour on the Propagation of the unprofitable and fruitless Doctrines of Irreligion, must ever be contrary to it's ruling Character.

But Avarice naturally tends to the Destruction of active religious Principles; because this is chiefly a Matter of *habitual Impression*; and therefore, in order to accomplish it's Destruction, nothing more is necessary than to *forget*. Now this requires no positive act or Labour of the Mind, but is the natural Result from an attentive Pursuit of the favourite Object, *Money*.

Hence, in a mere commercial State, actuated by the Love of Gain, religion is not railed at or disputed against, but only *neglected* and *forgot*. And thus the *genuine Trader*, who never questioned the Articles of his national Faith at home, scruples not to forswear *Christianity*, and tread upon the Cross in *Japan*, and returns the same good *Christian* as he went.

But in the mixed State, where national Effeminacy forms the *primary*, and Avarice only the *secondary* Character, the Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth on religious Principle, will be widely different.

Lord VERULAM<sup>2</sup> hath some where observed, that "Times of Atheism are civil Times." He had been much nearer the Truth, had he affirmed, that "Civil Times are Times of Atheism." He mistook the Cause for the Effect.

This Effect of national Luxury and Refinement, in producing national Irreligion, is not difficult to account for. In some Periods of a State, Opinions controul Manners; but in most Periods, Manners controul Opinions. Where the ruling Manners coincide with the common Good, as in the middle Period of a State, there we commonly find that a rational and beneficent System of Religion prevails: This comes to pass, because the Principles of the received Religion contradict not the ruling Manners.

But in the State and Period of Luxury or Refinement, active religious Principle is lost thro' the attentive Pursuit of *Pleasure*; as in the commercial State, it is lost thro' the attentive Pursuit of *Gain*.

And *speculative* Belief, in this Period must naturally be lost along with *practical*; because *Leisure* and *Literature* having opened the Field of *Disputation*, Vice as well as Virtue will of course arm herself with every Weapon of Preservation and Defence. Luxury therefore will generally list under the Banner of Irreligion; because Religion condemns her Manners; Irreligion suffers, or approves them.

2. [I.e., Francis Bacon (1561–1626).]

To confirm the Truth of this Reasoning, we need only observe, that in the Period of refined Luxury, *few* but they who are involved in the *Vices*, are involved in the *Irreligion* of the Times.

One Exception, however, must be made, with Regard to the *Writers* against Religion. For *these*, though they *promote*, yet are not often *involved* in the common Degeneracy. This Fact hath been regarded as unaccountable: that *sober* Men of Morals apparently *unblameable*, should madly unhinge the great Principle of Religion and Society, without any visible Motive or Advantage. But by looking a little farther into human Nature, we shall easily resolve this seeming Paradox. These Writers are generally Men of Speculation and Industry; and therefore though they give themselves up to the Dictates of their ruling Passion, yet that ruling Passion commonly leads to the Tract of *abstemious* Manners. That Desire of *Distinction* and *Superiority*, so natural to Man, breaks out in a thousand various and fantastic Shapes, and in each of these, according as it is directed, becomes a Virtue or a Vice. In Times of Luxury and Dissipation therefore, when every Tenet of Irreligion is greedily embraced, what Road to *present Applause* can lie so open and secure, as that of disgracing religious Belief? Especially if the Writer help forward the Vices of the Times, by *relaxing Morals*, as well as *destroying Principles*. Such a Writer can have little else to do, but to new model the Paradoxes of ancient *Scepticism*, in order to *figure it* in the World, and be regarded by the Smatterers in Literature and Adepts in Folly, as a Prodigy of Parts and Learning. Thus his *Vanity* becomes deeply criminal, and is execrated by the Wise and Good, because it is gratified at the Expence of his Country's Welfare. But the *Consolation* which degenerate Manners received from his fatal Tenets, is repaid by eager *Praise*: And *Vice* impatiently drinks in and *applauds* his hoarse and boding voice, while like a *Raven*, he sits croaking universal Death, Despair, and Annihilation to the human Kind.

Thus, where Manners and Religion are opposed, nothing is so natural, as that the *one* should bear down the *other*. If Religion destroy not the ruling Manners, *these* will gather Strength, and destroy Religion. Especially, in a Country where Freedom is established, and Manners lost through the Exorbitance of Wealth, the Duration of religious Principles can be but short. Despotism arms itself with Terror; and by checking



the open and avowed *Profession*, checks in a certain Degree the *Progress* of *Impiety*. Whereas it must be acknowledged and lamented, as one of the unalterable Defects of a free Government that *Opinion* must have its Course. The Disease is bad; but the Cure would be fatal. Thus Freedom is compelled to admit an *Enemy*, who under the Pretence and Form of an *Ally*, often proves her *Destroyer*.

## Section IV

### *Of the Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth on the Principle of Honour*

In the mixed State, where Luxury and Effeminacy form the ruling Character of a People, the Excess of Trade and Wealth naturally tends to weaken or destroy the Principle of *Honour*, by fixing the Desire of Applause, and the Fear of Shame, on improper and ridiculous Objects. Instead of the Good of others, or the Happiness of the Public, the Object of Pursuit naturally sinks into some unmanly and trifling Circumstance: The Vanity of Dress, Entertainments, Equipage, Furniture, of course takes Possession of the Heart.

But in the pure commercial State, where the Love of Gain predominates among the higher Ranks, the Desire of Applause and Fear of Shame are not *perverted*, but *extinguished*. The Lust of Gold swallows up every other Passion: And a Nation of this Character can without Emotion stand the Laughter and Contempt of *Europe*, and say with the Miser,

Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo  
Ipse Domi, simulac Nummos contemplor in Arca.<sup>3</sup>

In whatever Shape, therefore, the Passion for Applause appear, whether it assume the fantastic Form of Vanity, the more solemn one of Pride, or the steady and elevated Desire of rational Esteem; we shall find this Excess of national Avarice tends to its Extinction. A great Writer in-

3. ["The people hiss me, but at home I clap my hands for myself, once I gaze on the moneys in my chest." *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Faircloth (Harvard: Loeb Library, 1929), ll. 66–67.]

deed hath told us, that “Vanity creates Industry;”<sup>4</sup> which is true: Notwithstanding this, we have seen above, that Industry in the Excess naturally begets Avarice; and Avarice in the Excess works a total Change in the Soul, and expels that Vanity which gave it birth.

The same great Writer hath told us, “that Pride destroys Industry;”<sup>5</sup> the Reverse of which holds equally true: “that Industry destroys Pride:” We speak here of Pride in the blameable Sense, as when it riseth into blind and overbearing *Insolence*. Industry in the moderate Degree tends to destroy this contemptuous Spirit, by introducing Knowledge and Equality: And in this Respect, as in most others, is attended with excellent Effects.

But the Spirit of Trade in its Excess, by introducing Avarice, destroys the Desire of *rational Esteem*. In Confirmation of this, we need only cast our Eyes on the HOLLANDERS and CHINESE, among whom the trading Spirit is almost in its unmixed Perfection: The one is the most *mercenary*, the other the most *thieving* of all Nations.

## Section V

### *Of their Effects on public Spirit*

This Part of our Subject needs little Investigation. For both in the commercial and mixed State, it appears, that exorbitant Trade and Wealth tend naturally to turn all the Attention of Individuals on *selfish* Gratification.

Therefore they must of course generally tend to destroy the principle of public Spirit: because *this* implies, that our Attention and Regard is turned on *others*.

In the commercial State, Avarice represents *Wealth*, in the mixed State Effeminacy represents *Pleasure*, as the *chief Good*. Both these Delusions tend to the Extinction of public Spirit.

These Delusions create a new Train of Wants, Fears, Hopes, and

4. L'Esprit des Loix, l. xix. c. 9.

5. Ibid.

Wishes: All these terminating in selfish Regard, naturally destroy every Effort of generous and public Principle.

## Section VI

### *Farther Remarks on this Subject*

In Consequence of these Remarks, some farther Distinctions will arise.

Thus, the religious Principle will *seem* to exist in the commercial State, where Avarice forms the national Character; while in the mixed State where Luxury and Effeminacy predominate, it is evidently destroyed. The Reason is, that in the first, although active Principle is lost, speculative Belief is not controverted: whereas, in the latter, not only active principle is lost, but Religion itself (if such a State be free) is publicly insulted and derided. Thus in *Holland*, Religion *seems* yet to exist; while in *England* it is evidently destroyed.

On the contrary, the Principle of Honour will seem to exist in the mixed State, where luxurious Effeminacy forms the primary Character of the Nation; while in the commercial State, where Avarice predominates, the Principle is evidently no more. The Reason is, that in the former, the Love of Applause and Fear of Shame are not wholly destroyed, but perverted, and turned upon unworthy Objects; while in the latter, the Passion itself is totally extinguished. Thus the faint Appearance of Honour yet remains in *England*, while in *Holland* it is manifestly destroyed.

But as modern *Dutch* Religion, and modern *English* Honour, seem no more than the Ghosts of departed Principles, so they have precisely those Effects which may reasonably be expected from such shadowy Non-Entities.

Again: The Colours or Characters of Industry and Avarice will naturally be *strong* in the commercial State: because, being almost wholly unmixed with Manners of a dissimilar Nature, the ruling Genius of the State is left uncontrouled, to its proper Operations and Effects.

But in the mixed State, where Industry and Love of Gain form the Character of the *secondary* Ranks; Dissipation and Effeminacy, of the *higher*; there the two separate Characters, by the Force of incidental

Coalition and Example, will always influence each other in a certain Degree. Some ambitious Traders will aspire to luxurious Effeminacy: Some, of the higher Orders, will descend to Industry and Merchandise. Thus each Rank must be tinctured with a Colour different from its own; and hence, the general Colour or Character of each of these Ranks, will, in some measure be controuled and *weakened*.

This Circumstance is favourable to the mixed State, beyond that which is purely commercial; as it checks in a certain Degree the Virulence of the Excess; and produceth a national Character in some Measure approaching that of more moderate Trade and Wealth.

Hence too it follows, that a State purely commercial, when once arrived at the Period of exorbitant Wealth, will naturally degenerate *faster* than that which is compounded of Commerce and Luxury. For whatever Causes check the ruling Manners in their *Degree*, will check them in their *Consequences*.

But beyond this, there is another Reason, why the State purely commercial will degenerate faster than the mixed State. In the commercial State, the ruling Manners go Hand in Hand with the Exorbitance of Wealth; because the Love of Gain, which forms the leading Character, being likewise the leading Motive, must be even prior to this Exorbitance in the Order of our Ideas: and therefore, in it's Effects, must be at least contemporary.

But in the mixed State, there will always be a short Period between the national Exorbitance of Wealth, and the national Increase of luxurious Effeminacy: because Manners, once got into a certain Track, are not at once thrown out of it. There must be a short Period, before the leading Parts of the Nation can *feel* their Increase of Wealth; and after this, another Period, before new and more refined Modes of Pleasure can be invented.

Hence a neighbouring Republic seems to have well nigh filled up the Measure of its Iniquities; while *ours*, as yet, are only rising towards the *Brim*.

Lastly; though the ruling Manners of such a mixed State are luxurious and effeminate, yet its public Measures will be *commercial*. First, because, Commerce is the Hand-Maid of *Wealth*, and therefore of *Pleasure*. Secondly, because the Idea of national Strength as well as Happiness, being degenerated into that of Wealth and external Good, Commerce

will above all Things be naturally encouraged, because it is the means of procuring them.

## Section VII

### *A Review of the Argument*

Thus our present exorbitant Degree of Trade and Wealth, in a mixed State like that of *England*, naturally tends to produce luxurious and effeminate Manners in the higher Ranks, together with a general Defect of *Principle*. And as the internal Strength of a Nation will always depend chiefly on the Manners and Principles of it's leading Members, so these effeminate Manners and this Defect of Principle operate powerfully, and fatally, on the national Conduct and Affairs. They have produced a general Incapacity, have weakened the national Spirit of Defence, have heightened the national Disunion: And this national Disunion, besides it's proper and immediate Effects, being founded in Avarice for the Ends of Dissipation, hath again weakened the small Remainder of publick Capacity and Defence; and thus seems to have fitted us for a Prey to the Insults and Invasions of our most powerful Enemy.

## Section VIII

### *An Objection considered*

Tho' this Estimate may appear *just* to those who take an enlarged View of Things in their Principles and Consequences; yet I am not ignorant of certain Maxims, generally approved, and hardly even disputed among modern Politicians, which if true, would weaken or overturn these accumulated Proofs.

The capital Maxim, which seems to include the rest, is this; "That vast Trade and Wealth, above all things make a Nation powerful and invincible, as they increase it's Numbers, enable it to pay it's Fleets and Armies, provide continual Supplies for War; and thus, in the End tire out and defeat every Enemy, whose Wealth and Commerce are inferior."

The Examination of this Maxim will throw many strong collateral Lights upon our main Subject.

First it affirms, "That Trade and Wealth make a Nation strong, because they make it populous." This indeed is true of the first and second Periods of Trade and Wealth; That it is true of the *third* or *highest* Period, of which *England* is now possessed, may very reasonably be questioned. In the first Period, Industry is chiefly employed in cultivating the Lands, in encreasing, manufacturing, and exchanging the Produce of the Mother Country. These Branches of Trade call for vast additional Numbers of Hands; and hence an Increase of Numbers naturally ariseth.

The same Effect takes Place in the second Period of Trade; so far as home Productions are *exchanged* for foreign ones. This Stage of Commerce brings on a fresh Demand of Artificers of new and various Kinds, produces an Increase of Labour, and therefore of Inhabitants.

But in the third or highest Period of Trade, of which *England* is now possessed, there are very extensive Branches of Commerce, which brings no new Accession of Numbers to the Comonwealth. I mean, all those Branches of Commerce, where *Money* is sent and exchanged for *foreign* Goods. This Species of Trade occasions little Increase of *Labour*, and therefore less of *Numbers*; except only of those few who navigate the Vessels thus employed, to their respective Ports. And as this kind of Trade will always grow and predominate, in proportion as a Nation becomes more luxurious and effeminate, so for this Reason the highest Stage of Trade is not naturally attended with the highest Increase of Labour, nor consequently of *Numbers*, as is commonly imagined. Besides this, in the refined Period, additional Art and Experience in Labour prevent, in some Measure, the Increase of Numbers. By the Invention of Machines, an equal Degree both of Tillage and Trade is carried on by fewer Hands, than in the simpler Periods; and therefore the Increase of Numbers is by no means proportional to the Increase of Commerce and Wealth.

But these are far from being the only Considerations worth our Notice on this Subject. For when we speak of any Stage of Trade, we must in Reason take in *every* Circumstance which naturally attends it. There are other Causes, therefore, why Numbers increase not, but rather naturally *diminish*, in the highest Period of Trade and Wealth.

For *first*, the Vanity and Effeminacy which this exorbitant Pitch of Wealth brings on, lessens the Desire of Marriage.

*Secondly*, the Intemperance and Disease which this Period of Trade naturally produceth among the *lower Ranks* in great Cities, bring on in some Degree an Impotence of Propagation.

*Thirdly*, This Debility is always attended with a Shortness of Life, both in the Parents and the Offspring; and therefore a still farther Diminution of Numbers follows on the whole.

Matter of Fact confirms these Reasonings; and lies open to every Man's Observation. Since the first Increase of Tillage and Home-manufactures, the Increase of Inhabitants hath been great in *England*: Since the vast Increase of foreign Commerce, the Increase of Numbers is hardly perceivable. Nay, there is great Reason to believe, that upon the whole, the Nation is less populous than it was fifty Years ago, tho' it's Trade perhaps is doubled. Some trading Towns indeed are better peopled, but others are thinned by the Flux of Commerce. The Metropolis seems to augment in its Dimensions: But it appears, by the best Calculations, that it's Numbers are diminished; And as to the Villages thro' *England*, there is great Reason to believe, they are in general at a Stand, and many of them thinner of Inhabitants than in the Beginning of this Century. 'Tis hard to obtain Certainty in this Particular, without a general Examination and Comparison. But it appears by the Registers of some *Country* Parishes, which I have looked into, that from the Year 1550 to 1710 the Number of Inhabitants increased gradually; the two Extremes being to each other, as 57 to 72; and that from 1710 to the present Time, the Number has been at a Stand, if not rather diminished.

But suppose, what there is no Reason to believe, that our present Excess of Trade and Overflow of Wealth have in some Degree increased our *Numbers*, yet it will probably appear, that they have as much, at least, impaired our *bodily Strength*. For as *Temperance* is the ruling Character of the middle Stage of Commerce, so is *Intemperance* of the highest. Hence, Health and Strength prevail in the first; Disease and Debility in the latter. This is universally confirmed by Fact: Villages abounding with Health, commercial Cities with Disease. So that an Army taken from the Villages, with equal Commanders, Arms, and Discipline, would

drive the same Number of debilitated Gin-drinkers, like a Flock of Geese before them.

The Author of the *Fable of the Bees* made his Boast, that the Wisdom of the Legislature had, upon his Plan, adopted the Encouragement of this pernicious Liquid: But the same Wisdom hath upon Trial been obliged to *discourage* the Use of this malignant Spirit; as they found that it ruined the Health, and shortened the Lives, of half the lower Ranks in *London*.

And all good Men hope that the Time will come, when this infernal Potion will be laid under such Discouragements, as may amount to a general Prohibition. The Necessity of such a Reformation grows greater every Day, not only in *London*, but throughout the Kingdom. For in some Villages in *England* there is now a greater Quantity of Gin consumed than of Ale.

But to quit these inferior Considerations, tho' they all unite in confirming the Theory here advanced; the Weight of the Reply lies indeed in another Circumstance: For altho' we should admit (what is not true) that our present Exorbitance of Trade and Wealth increased our Numbers and bodily Force, yet as the real and essential Strength of a Nation consists in the Manners and Principles of it's *leading Part*; and as our present Excess of Trade and Wealth hath produced such fatal Effects on these Manners and Principles; no Increase of Numbers in the inferior Ranks can possibly make amends for this internal and capital Defect. Such a Nation can, at best, only resemble a large *Body*, actuated (yet hardly actuated) by an incapable, a vain, a dastardly, and effeminate *Soul*.

But the Maxim we are engaged to obviate, alledges farther, that "This exorbitant Increase of Trade and Wealth enables a Nation to pay it's Fleets and Armies, and afford continual Supplies for War." Yet, even this Part of the Maxim, in it's modern Acceptation, is far beyond the Truth.

For under the present Stage of Trade, the Increase of Wealth is by no means equally or proportionally diffused: The Trader reaps the main Profit: after him, the Landlord, in a lower Degree: But the common Artificer, and still more the common Labourer, gain little by the exorbitant Advance of Trade: It is true, their Wages are increased; but so are the Prices of Provisions too: and therefore they are no richer than before.



Now Taxes and public Supplies are raised upon the Consumer: and as it appears from hence, that only a few of the Consumers are made richer by the Exorbitance of Trade, it follows, that not the Nation in general, but a select Number of Individuals only, are made more capable of contributing to those supplies, which are levied without Distinction on the *whole*. Would they who reap the plenteous Harvest of foreign Trade, generously allot their proportional and extraordinary Gains to the Service of the Public, we should then indeed be furnished with a *new* Argument in Favour of Commerce in it's highest Pitch.

Farther: As the labouring Ranks are little or nothing enriched by the exorbitant Degree of Trade, so it often happens that even the higher Ranks, and the Nation in general, are not *more*, nay perhaps less enabled to contribute to the public Supplies, than when possessed of Wealth in a more moderate Degree. For we have seen, in the Progress of this Estimate, that the natural Effect of an Increase of Wealth, is an Increase of Luxury, Vanity, and Expence; which, if it outrun the Increase of Wealth, as in it's Nature it tends to do, instead of Riches will bring on public Poverty. For the Ability or Wealth of a People, considered in their Capacity for raising Supplies, consists not in the Largeness of their Income, but in the Proportion of their Expences to their Income: It consists not in "what they *have*," but "what they can *Spare*?" Hence it appears, that a Nation may be at once very *rich*, and very *poor*; rich in Income, but poor thro' Extravagance. And as national Extravagance is the natural Effect of an Overflow of Wealth, so national Indigence is it's most natural and final Consequence. How far this is our present Situation, can hardly be necessary to affirm.

To this Argument it may possibly be objected that if great Wealth is but among us, new Imposts will naturally *force* it into Circulation. That the more the Artificers and Labourers are taxed, the more their Wages will increase, and consequently their Ability to bear the increasing Taxes: And that as to the higher Ranks, exorbitant Wealth *enables* them still better to endure additional Imposts, because these deprive the Great of nothing but the Superfluities of Vanity and Luxury.

To this it is replied, that in Case of additional Taxes, tho' the Poor *must* indeed increase their Wages in order to subsist, yet this Increase never

takes Place, till they are compelled by the last *Necessity* and *Want*: The natural Consequence of which must be Murmurs, Sedition, and Tumults. With Regard to the higher Ranks, a parallel Reply may suffice: For in the refined Period, when Manners and Principles are lost, the Luxuries of Life become *Necessaries* among the Great; and therefore will be as obstinately adhered to, and quitted with the same Reluctance, as Food and Cloathing by the *Poor*. The Consequence therefore must be the same; a general Discontent and Disaffection to the Government, among the higher Ranks of Life.

Is not all this confirmed by evident Facts; There is at present in this Nation a Mass of Wealth at least twelve Times more than the publick Debt: Yet we are reduced to the sad Necessity of plunging deeper every Day. What is the Reason? No Ministry dares to provoke and exasperate a luxurious and selfish Nation, by demanding such Sums, as every one has the *Power* had he but the *Will*, to bestow.

But beyond all this, will any Man of Sense assert, that the Circumstance of *paying* an Army or a Fleet, is the one thing that will decide a War? 'Tis true, indeed, Provisions, Arms, Ammunition are necessary; and therefore *Wealth*, because it procures them. But will a General or Admiral therefore gain the Victory, only because his Men are furnished with Provisions, Arms, and Ammunition? If not, what can Trade or Wealth do, towards making a Nation victorious? Again, therefore, let me remind my Countrymen, that the capital Question still remains, not, "who shall *pay*," but "who shall *fight*?"

There is a trite Observation on Foot, indeed, drawn from the best political Writers ill understood, that "the Principles of War are wholly changed; and that not the Nation who has the best *Troops*, but the longest *Purse*, will in the End obtain the Victory." This, in the modern Application of it, is a most dangerous Maxim. It naturally tends to extinguish military Skill, as well as Honour: And will inevitably sink the People that maintains it, into a Nation of defenseless and Money-getting Cowards.

It must be confessed that Doctor DAVENANT, the most able Writer on these Subjects, hath affirmed, "That now, the whole Art of War is in a Manner reduced to Money; and now-a-day, that Prince who can best

find Money to feed, cloath, and pay his Army, not he that hath the most valiant Troops, is surest of Success and Conquest.”<sup>6</sup> This Declaration, which is now stolen and retailed for new, by every modern Dabler in Politics, has had the usual Fortune of these kind of Thefts, to be misunderstood: as may appear from the general Tenor of the Doctor’s Writings. To shew this, two Instances, out of many may suffice. Even when speaking on the Benefits of foreign Trade, he warns us, as if he had foreseen all that has befallen, or is likely to befall us. For he says, “If a trading and rich People are grown soft and luxurious, their Wealth will invite over to them Invaders from Abroad, and their being *effeminate* will make the Conquest easy.”<sup>7</sup> And again, in Terms yet stronger: “In succeeding Times our Manners may come to be depraved; and when this happens, all Sorts of Miseries will invade us: The whole Wealth of the Kingdom will not be sufficient for it’s Defence.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, what he and other sensible Writers have affirmed under proper Restrictions, and upon Supposition that a Nation maintained it’s Manners and Principles, is now advanced absolutely, and without Restriction, as if Manners and Principles, military and naval Skill and Courage, had no Part, or at least no essential Part, in the Success of War.

These shallow Politicians, therefore, might well be put in Mind of the Maxim of a warlike Prince, when his Ministers dissuaded him from attacking a wealthy Enemy, because he wanted Money to pay his Troops. “My Enemies, said he, are rich, luxurious, and effeminate; my Troops are valiant and hardy; my Officers brave and honourable; they shall plant *my* Standard in my Enemy’s Country, and then *my Enemy shall pay them.*”

We have lately seen this military Conduct followed by a brave King, in the Electorate of *Saxony*: We ourselves have formerly pursued it on the Plains of *Agincourt* and *Cressi*: The *French* are now pursuing it on the Plains of *America*: And if we hold to our dastardly Maxim, they will pursue it on the Plains of *Salisbury*.

Thus the boasted modern Maxim which we proposed to obviate,

6. Ways and Means, p. 27. [Charles Davenant (1656–1714), *An essay upon ways and means of supplying the war* (London: Tonson, 1695), 2 vols.]

7. Dav[enant] on Trade, v. ii, p. 13.

8. Ibid. p. 317.

seems void of Truth in every Branch of it: As it appears from this View, that without the internal Strength which Manners and Principles produce, the most exorbitant Trade and Wealth can never be the Foundation of a successful War; or give us any rational Prospect, either of *Victory* or *Self-Defence*.

## Section IX

### *Another Objection considered*

Such then are the natural Effects of exorbitant Trade and Wealth, unless counteracted by opposite Manners or Principles. The History of our own Nation would confirm these Truths in a most striking and particular Manner, were it within the proposed Limits of this Estimate, to enter so large a Field of Enquiry. We should there see, that Manners and Principles have always prevailed, and baffled the most sanguine Attempts of Wealth, when set in Competition with them. This System would be found supported by a vast Variety of Events, from the Reign of *Elizabeth* to the present Times. But this might perhaps be regarded as a Research rather curious than necessary; since a single Reflection on the present State of the Kingdom may seem to stand in the Place of a thousand Proofs.

At present therefore, we shall not touch on this Enquiry; but rather proceed to remove another Objection, which may seem to overturn the Theory here proposed.

For it is urged, that *France* is an Exception to the Truth of these Remarks: inasmuch as, in the midst of a large and extensive Commerce, which brings in a vast Accession of Wealth, she still retains her Principles and Power.

The Fact objected is true: But the Consequence follows not; because the Trade of *France* is limited and controuled by such Accidents, as prevent it's most dangerous and ruinous Effects on Government.

The *Poverty* of its *Noblesse* or leading Ranks, who are often possessed of sounding Titles without any Realities annexed, as it prevents them from reaping that Increase of Wealth which naturally ariseth to a rich Landed Gentry from an Increase of Commerce, so it naturally drives

them to the Profession of *Arms*, as the necessary Means of Support: This strengthens and supports their Monarchy; which, finding it's Advantage from this Disposition to Arms, naturally gratifies this military Spirit in it's *Noblesse*, and gives it Exercise and Encouragement by frequent Wars.

Hence the national Spirit of the *French Noblesse* hath long been military, in the highest Degree.

With Regard to Commerce, it's Growth in *France* hath been but late: Meeting therefore with this established Spirit of Arms in the leading Ranks, it hath not as yet been able to controul it. Commerce indeed is encouraged; but so encouraged, as not to destroy the leading Principle of their Monarchy. To this End, the Ranks of the Kingdom are kept essentially distinguished; and while the People are allured to Trade by every Kind of Motive, the *Noblesse* or Gentry are, in Honour, prohibited from Commerce. It was indeed formerly proposed in *France*, that the *Noblesse* should be drawn down to Trade[.] But, whether thro' deep and consummate Policy, or thro' the Principle of Honour itself, working blindly for it's own Preservation, the dangerous Proposal was *weakly* or *wisely* rejected. Whenever this Overture meets with Acceptance and Success, tho' it may seem for a while to give Vigour to their State, yet from that Period we may date the Downfall of *France*. Their effeminate Manners, now controuled by *Oeconomy* and the Love of *Glory*, will, like ours, degenerate into *Profusion* and the Love of *Gold*.

On the contrary; Trade, tho' encouraged, is by the ruling Principles of this great Monarchy, kept within it's proper Limits; and while the Merchant traverseth Seas in Pursuit of *Gain*, the Gentleman does the same in Pursuit of *Glory*. Thus the two incompatible Provinces are kept distinct; and hence, while the *French* vie with us in *Trade*, they tower above us in *Principle*.

Nay their very trading Settlements among foreign Nations are actuated by this ruling Principle in such a Manner, as to give a Splendor to their Monarchy and Commerce in the most barbarous Climates.<sup>9</sup> Thus,

9. Numerous Proofs might be given of this: At present it may suffice to take one from a very fine Book lately published. "It is usual among the *French* of *Alexandria* to shew an extreme Respect for their Consul. In order to make him more considerable in the Eyes of the *Turks*, and of the other Nations, they endeavour to give an high Idea of his Person, and to illustrate his Birth in such a Manner, that it is not their Fault, if he is not consid-

while *we* are poorly influenced by a sorry and mercantile Maxim, first broached by a trading Minister, “that the *Interest* of a Nation is it’s *truest Honour*,” the *French* conduct themselves on an opposite and higher Principle, “that the *Honour* of a Nation is its truest Interest.”

In Confirmation of what is here advanced, we need only cast our Eyes on the Fortune and Fate of *France*, during the present Century. In the last War, she was exhausted, tho’ victorious: In the former, she was both beaten and exhausted: In both these Instances, it was weakly thought by every superficial Politician in *England*, that because we had exhausted the Men and Money, we had destroyed the Power of *France*. Experience hath told us the Reverse: The Spirit of Honour and Union working at the Root, soon restored those Branches that War had swept away, and have at length shot them into their former Vigour and Luxuriancy.

Hence then, we may learn an important Truth: “That no incidental Events can make a Nation *little*, while the Principles remain that made it *great*.”

## Section X

### *The Conclusion*

From these accumulated Proofs, then it seems evident, that our present effeminate Manners and Defect of Principle have arisen from our exorbitant Trade and Wealth, left without Check, to their natural Operations and uncontrouled Influence. And that these Manners, and this Defect of Principle, by weakening or destroying the national Capacity, Spirit of Defence, and Union, have produced such a general Debility as naturally leads to Destruction.

We might now proceed to confirm these Reasonings, by Examples drawn from History. For there is hardly an ancient or modern State of

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ered as issued from the Blood Royal. If by Chance he take a Tour to *Rosetto*, he carries a white Flag at the Mast of his Pinnacle; and when he goes out of the Port, as likewise when he returns into it, he is saluted by a general Discharge of the Cannon of the *French Vessels*.” NORDEN’s Travels in *Egypt and Nubia*, Vol. i. p. 29. [Peter Templeman (1711–69) and Frederick Lewis Norden (1708–42), *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* (London: Davis & Reymers, 1757), 2 vols.]

any Note recorded in Story, which would not in one Respect or other, confirm the leading Principles on which this Argument is built.

In these, throughout their several Periods, we should see *Trade* and *Wealth*, or (what is in this respect equivalent) *Conquest* and *Opulence*, taking their Progress: At one Period, polishing and strengthening: at another, refining, corrupting, weakening, destroying, the State that gave them Entrance: Working indeed in different Ways, and under a Variety of Appearances: by Avarice, by Faction, by Effeminacy, by Profligacy; by a Mixture and Combination of all these Evils: sometimes dividing a Nation against itself; at others, quelling it's Spirit, and leaving it an easy Prey to the first Invader: Sometimes checked by a rising Patriot, or counterworked by national Misfortunes: In one Country corrupting Manners; in another, Principles; in a third, both Manners and Principles: rendering one People blind, another cowardly, another treacherous to itself: Stealing secretly and insensibly on one Nation; overwhelming another in sudden Destruction.

But to enlarge on these Subjects in that vague and undistinguishing Manner, which most Writers have pursued in treating them, tho' it might carry the *Appearance* of Reasoning, would in Truth be no more than *Declamation* in Disguise. And to develope and unravel the Particularity of Causes and Effects, thro' all their Variety of Combination and mutual Influence, as it would extend this Estimate beyond it's designed Limits, must be left to make a Part of some future Enquiry.

The *Character*, *Effects*, and *Sources* of our Manners and Principles, being thus laid open, the Writer had it in his Thoughts to have proceeded to the Consideration of "*their most practicable Remedies*." But as the Closet-*Projects* of retired and speculative Men, often *are*, and always are *regarded*, as *chimerical*: he was therefore unwilling, at present, to hazard the Discredit of such an Attempt.

However, lest his Attempt should be deemed more visionary than perhaps it is, he judged it not improper to hint at some of the leading Principles on which it is built. And with this View, the following Reflections are submitted to the Consideration of the Public.

The World has been long amused with a trite and hacknied Comparison between the Life of Man, and that of States; in which it is pretended that they both proceed in the same irrevocable Manner; from Infancy to

Maturity, from Maturity to Death: A Comparison, perhaps as groundless as it is common. The human Body contains, in its very Texture, the Seeds of certain Dissolution. That is, tho' you set aside all the possible Accidents arising from Intemperance, from the Influence of the Elements, the Climate, and every other external and contingent Cause, the human Frame itself, after a certain Period, would grow into Rigidity; the Fluids would decrease, the Solids accumulate, the Arteries *ossify*, the Blood stagnate, and the Wheels of Life stand still.

But in Societies, of whatever Kind, there seems no such necessary or essential Tendency to Dissolution. The human Body is *naturally* mortal; the political, only so by *Accident*: Internal Disorders or Diseases may arise; External Violence may attack or overpower: but these Causes, tho' always to be expected, are wholly incidental: the first is precisely of the same Nature as Intemperance, the second as the Influence of the external Elements, on the human Body. But there appears nothing in the internal Construction of any State, that tends inevitably to Dissolution, analogous to those Causes in the human Frame, which lead to certain Death.

This Observation seems confirmed by History: Where you see States, which, after being sunk in Corruption and Debility, have been brought back to the Vigour of their first Principles: But you must have recourse to Fables, for medicated Old Age, restored to Infancy or Youth.





# “Luxury”

1764

THE POET Jean-François, Marquis de Saint-Lambert, was born into a poor and obscure noble family in 1716. After a Jesuit education, he served in the infantry and for the king of Poland. Stationed at Lunéville, he was acquainted with Voltaire, fell in love with his mistress Emilie du Châtelet, and sired a child by her. When she died in childbirth (1749), he gained notoriety and moved to Paris, where his poetry began to attract attention. Voltaire described his now-obscure *Les Saisons* as “the only work in our century that will pass into posterity.” In the Seven Years War, he became a colonel for the French army, though an attack of paralysis led him to leave the military career for good in 1758, and instead pursue a life of letters. He was friendly with the *Encyclopédie* circle, including Diderot, Mme. Geoffrin, d’Holbach, Grimm, Mme. d’Epinay, and especially Mme. d’Houdetot, with whom he had an affair that was celebrated for its dignity and fidelity until his death nearly half a century later. His plays and, especially, his highly scientific and philosophic poetry led to his selection by the Académie Française in 1770, where he became influential. His *Catéchisme universel*, a lengthy work on the origins and nature of human morality, won the grand prize for *morale* at the Institut in 1810. Saint-Lambert died in 1803.

The work translated here for the first time is his *Encyclopédie* essay on luxury (1764). It was immediately reproduced as a free-standing *Essai sur le luxe* and published the same year. The edition used is Diderot, d’Alembert, et al., eds., *Encyclopédie*, 17 vols. (Paris: Briasson, 1751–65), 8:763–71.

All notes and explanatory material are by the present editor and are in brackets. Where stylistic considerations permit, we have translated *moeurs*° as “manners and morals.” Otherwise, we chose one term or the other according to context.

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## Luxury

LUXURY: It defines the use one makes of wealth and industry to procure a pleasant existence.

The first cause of luxury is our dissatisfaction with our situation, our desire to be better off, which is and must be in all men. This is the cause of their passions, their virtues and their vices. That desire unfailingly makes them love and seek wealth. Therefore, the desire to enrich oneself is and must be among the resources of any government not founded on equality and common property. Now, the main object of that desire must be luxury. There is thus luxury in all states and in all societies. The savage has his hammock which he buys with pelts; the European has his sofa and his bed. Our women put on red and diamonds; the women of Florida put on blue and glass beads.

Luxury has always been the subject of the declamations of the Moralists, who have censured it with more moroseness than insight, and recently it has been the subject of praise by a few men of politics who have talked about it more as merchants or clerks than as philosophers or statesmen.

They have said that luxury contributed to the growth of population.

According to Livy [*History of Rome*], Italy at the height of the republic's grandeur and luxury had less than half the population it had when it was divided into small republics almost devoid of luxury and industry.

They have said that luxury enriches states.

There are few states where there is greater luxury than Portugal. And yet, with the resources of its soil, its situation, and its colonies, Portugal

is less wealthy than Holland, which does not have the same advantages, and whose manners and morals [*mœurs*<sup>o</sup>] are dominated by frugality and simplicity.

They have said that luxury facilitates the circulation of money.

France is today one of the nations where there is the greatest luxury, and one rightly complains there about the lack of circulation for money, which goes from the provinces into the capital without flowing back from the capital into the provinces.

They have said that luxury softens manners and spreads the private virtues.

There is much luxury in Japan, yet manners and morals are still atrocious there. There were more private virtues in Rome and Athens, more humanity and beneficence when both were poor than in the period of their luxury.

They have said that luxury was favorable to the progress of knowledge and the fine arts.

What progress did knowledge and the fine arts make among the Sybarites, the Lydians, and the Tonkinites [i.e., the Vietnamese]?

They have said that luxury increases both the strength of nations and the happiness of citizens.

Under Cyrus, the Persians had little luxury, and they subjugated the rich and industrious Assyrians. As they became rich and emerged as the people among whom luxury was most prevalent, the Persians were subjugated by the Macedonians, a poor people. Savages overthrew or usurped the empires of the Romans, and those of some caliphs of India or China. As far as the happiness of citizens is concerned, if luxury provides more conveniences and pleasures, you shall see—if you travel over Europe and Asia—that at least it does not do so to the greatest number of citizens.

The censors of luxury are also contradicted by the facts.

They say there is no luxury without extreme inequality of wealth, that is to say without the people living in misery, and a few men in abundance. But this disproportion is not always to be found in the countries where there is the greatest luxury; it can be found in Poland and in other countries where there is less luxury than in Bern or Geneva, where the people live in affluence.

They say that luxury leads to a sacrifice of the useful for the agreeable arts, and that it ruins the countryside as it gathers people in the cities.

Lombardy and Flanders are full of luxury, and of beautiful cities; and yet the farmers are wealthy there, the lands cultivated and well-populated. There is little luxury in Spain, and agriculture is neglected; most of the useful arts are neglected there.

They say that luxury contributes to depopulation.

For a century, luxury and population in England have increased in similar proportions; moreover, England has populated some immense colonies.

They say that luxury weakens courage.

Under the commands of Luxembourg, Villars, and the count of Saxe,<sup>1</sup> the French—a people living in the greatest luxury known—showed themselves to be the most courageous. Under Sylla, Caesar, and Lucullus, the prodigious luxury of the Romans carried over into their armies detracted nothing from their courage.

They say that luxury kills the feelings of honor and love of country.

To prove the contrary, I will cite the spirit of honor and the luxury of the French in the finest years of Louis XIV's reign, and since then, I will cite the fanaticism for the homeland [*patrie*°], enthusiasm for virtue, and love of glory that now characterize the English nation.

I do not claim to gather here all the good and bad things that have been said about luxury. I limit myself to stating the main forms of praise or blame and to showing that history contradicts both.

The most moderate philosophers who have written against luxury have claimed that it was harmful to states only when it was excessive, and they have located this excess in the greater number of objects and means that it involves, that is, in the number and perfection of the arts, in this period when industry is making the greatest progress, which accustoms nations to enjoy innumerable commodities and pleasures, and renders them necessities. Finally, these philosophers saw the dangers of luxury only in the wealthiest and most enlightened nations. But it was not diffi-

1. [Christian-Louis de Montmorency-Luxembourg, Claude-Louis-Hector Villars (1658–1734), and Hermann Maurice, Count of Saxe (1696–1750), important military leaders in France.]

cult for philosophers who had more logic and more spirit than those moderate men to prove to them that luxury had been harmful to poor and almost barbaric nations. And step by step, it followed that people wanted to put men back into the woods and into a certain primitive state—which has never existed and cannot exist—so that men would avoid the inconveniences of luxury.

Until now the apologists of luxury have offered no solid answer to those who, following the flow of events, the rise and decline of empires, have seen that luxury was increasing by degrees together with nations, that morals were becoming corrupted, and that empires were weakening, declining, and falling.

We have the examples of the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Chinese, and so on, whose luxury increased in tandem with their grandeur, and who from the moment of their greatest luxury never ceased losing their virtues and power.

These examples are more effective in proving the dangers of luxury than are the reasons its apologists put forward to justify it. As a result, the most commonly held opinion today is that luxury must be there to drag nations out of weakness and obscurity, to give them a strength, consistency, and wealth that put them above other nations. And this luxury must constantly increase to allow the progress of the arts, industry, and trade, as well as to lead nations to that level of maturity that is necessarily followed by their decline and eventually their destruction. This opinion is quite general, and even Mr. Hume is not far removed from it.<sup>2</sup>

How is it that none of the philosophers and men of politics who have dealt with luxury in their speculations have ever said to themselves that, when nations begin to take shape, one is and must be more attached to the principles of government; that in newly created societies, all laws and regulations are important to the members of that society, provided it was established freely; and that if it was not, all laws and regulations are supported by the power of the legislator, whose views have not yet changed, and whose means are not diminished in terms of strength or number; finally, that the personal interests of each citizen—which are almost everywhere in opposition to the common interest, and which constantly

2. [See Hume's "Of Refinement in the Arts," chapter 23 in this volume.]

tend to drift away from it—had had less time and fewer means to be in opposition to it. As a result, it is more mingled with it; and therefore in newly created societies, there must be more morals and virtues, and a more patriotic spirit, than in ancient societies.

But also when nations first emerged, reason, intelligence, and industry made less progress; there was less wealth and luxury, fewer arts, and fewer means to procure a pleasant life by the toil of others, and inevitably there was poverty and simplicity.

Because it is part of the nature of men and things that governments should become corrupted with time, and that states should grow wealthier with time, arts then improve and luxury increases.

Have we not been considering as cause and effect things that, without being cause and effect, can be encountered together and proceed at almost the same pace?

Have not private interests—without being turned into a love of wealth and pleasures, i.e., those passions leading to luxury—led now magistrates, now the king or the people to make changes in the constitution of the state, which became corrupted because of them? Or is it not a fact that those private interests, habits, and prejudices have prevented changes that had become necessary because of changing circumstances? And finally, is it not a fact that in the constitution, in the administration, there are mistakes and flaws that, apart from any luxury, have corrupted governments and led to the decline of empires?

The ancient Persians, who were poor and virtuous under Cyrus, conquered Asia, brought back luxury, and became corrupted. But were they corrupted because they conquered Asia or because they brought back luxury? Was it not the extent of their domination that changed their morals? Was it not impossible for good order or any kind of order to survive in so large an empire? Was Persia not destined to sink into the abyss of despotism? Why should we search for other causes of corruption wherever we see despotism?

Despotism is the arbitrary power of one over a great number with the aid of a small number, but the despot cannot obtain arbitrary power without corrupting that small number.

Athens is said to have lost its strength and virtue after the Peloponnesian war, the era of its wealth and luxury. I find a real cause for the de-

cline of Athens in the power of the people and the debasement of the senate. When I see the executive and legislative powers in the hands of a blind multitude, and when at the same time I see the Areopagus<sup>3</sup> powerless, I then judge that the republic of Athens could have kept neither its power nor its good order. It was in abasing the Areopagus, not in raising the theaters, that Pericles lost Athens. As for the manners of that republic, it still kept them for a long time, and during the war that destroyed it, it lacked prudence more than virtue, good sense rather than morals.

The example of ancient Rome, referred to by the censors of luxury with so much confidence, would not embarrass me any more. I would first observe the virtues of Rome, the strength and simplicity of its manners, emerging from its government and its situation. But this government surely brought the Romans some anxiety and some turmoil. It rendered war necessary for them, and war strengthened their morals and fostered their fanatical patriotism. I would see that when Carneades [213–129 B.C.] came to Rome, and when statues from Corinth and Athens were brought there, there were two parties in Rome, one of which was destined to subjugate the other as soon as the state had nothing more to fear from abroad. I would see that in that immense empire, the victorious party was destined to lead it either to despotism or to anarchy. And even if one had never seen in Rome the luxury or wealth of Antioch or Carthage, nor the philosophers and masterworks of Greece, the Roman republic—designed only for ceaseless aggrandizement—would have nevertheless fallen at the moment of its greatness.

It seems to me that if one cited Asia, plunged in luxury, poverty, and vice, to prove the dangers of luxury, I would ask someone to show me a single nation in Asia (China excepted) where the government cared about the morals and happiness of a great number of its subjects.

I would not be more embarrassed by those who—to prove that luxury corrupts morals and reduces courage—would point to modern Italy, which lives in luxury and which is indeed not warlike. I would tell them that if one leaves aside the military spirit, which is not part of the Italian character, that character is as worthy as those of other nations. Nowhere

3. [I.e., the highest judicial court of the city.]

will you find more humanity and beneficence; nowhere does social life have more charms than in Italy; nowhere are the private virtues more deeply cultivated. I would say that Italy, subject to the authority partly of a clergy that preaches only peace, and partly of a republic whose purpose is tranquillity, absolutely cannot be warlike. I would even say that it would be useless for them to be that way; that men and nations have very little of the virtues that are useless to them; that she is not united under a single government; and finally that, because Italy is surrounded by four great powers—namely, Turkey, the House of Austria, France, and Spain—Italy could not possibly resist any of these great powers, whatever its manners might be. Therefore it should concern itself with civil laws, the administration, the arts, and everything that can make life peaceful and agreeable. I would conclude by saying that it is not luxury but its situation and the nature of its governments which prevent Italy from having strong morals and war-like virtues.

After seeing that luxury could not have been the cause of either the fall or the prosperity of empires or the characters of certain nations, I would examine whether luxury should not be relative to the situations of peoples, to their types of productions, and to the situations and types of productions of their neighbors.

I would say that the Dutch, who are the makers and providers of nations, must preserve their frugality, without which they could not provide the freights of their ships at low rates and carry the commodities of the world.

I would say that if the Swiss derived from France and Italy many wines, gold and silk fabrics, paintings, statues, and precious stones, they would not derive from their sterile lands enough with which to pay back foreign countries; and they will be allowed to enjoy a great luxury only when their industry has made up for the scarcity of the country's production.

If one assumed that in Spain, in Portugal, in France, the land was badly tilled, and that manufactures of primary or secondary necessity were neglected, those nations would still be able to maintain a great deal of luxury.

Thanks to its mines in Brazil, its wines, and its colonies in Africa and



Asia, Portugal will always have something to provide foreign countries and will be able to rank among the rich nations.

However little labor or farming is done there and in its colonies, Spain will always have the productions of the fertile countries under its domination in two worlds; and the rich mines of Mexico and Potosi will support the luxury of the court and of superstition there.

France, after abandoning its agriculture and its manufactures of primary and secondary necessity, would still have branches of commerce overflowing with wealth. Pepper from India, sugar and coffee from its colonies, its oils and wines would provide it with exchanges with foreign countries, from which it would derive part of its luxury. It would support this luxury even more by its fashions; this nation, which has long been admired by Europe, is still imitated by it today. If ever its luxury was excessive compared to the product of its lands and its manufactures of primary and secondary necessity, this luxury would be its own remedy; it would nurture innumerable fashion workers and would delay the ruin of the state.

I would conclude from these observations and reflections that luxury is opposed to or favorable to the wealth of nations depending on whether it consumes more or less of the produce of their lands and industry, whether it consumes the produce of the lands and industry of foreign countries; that it should have more or fewer objects, depending on whether these nations have more or fewer resources. In this regard, luxury is for peoples what it is for individuals; the multitude of gratifications must be in keeping with the means to enjoy them.

I would see that this desire to enjoy on the part of the wealthy, and the desire to become wealthy on the part of those who have only the bare necessities, must stir up the arts and every kind of industry. That is the first effect of the instincts and passions that lead us to luxury and of luxury itself. These new arts and this growth in industry give the people new means of subsistence, and they must therefore increase the population; without luxury, there are fewer exchanges and less trade; without trade, nations must be less populated, and the nation that has only farmers within it must have fewer people than the one that maintains farmers, seamen, and textile workers. Sicily, which has but little luxury, is one of

the most fertile countries on earth; it is ruled by a moderate government, yet it is neither wealthy nor populated.

After seeing that the passions that inspire luxury and luxury itself can be profitable to the wealth and population of states, I still do not see how this luxury and these passions could be opposed to manners and morals. However, I cannot deny that in a few regions of the world there are nations that have the greatest commerce and the greatest luxury but that lose every day some of their inhabitants and some of their manners and morals.

If there were a government established on the basis of perfect equality and uniformity of morals, manners, and status among its citizens—somehow like the governments of Sparta, Crete, and a few peoples we call Savages—it is certain that the desire to enrich oneself could not be innocent there. Anyone who wished to enjoy a greater fortune than his fellow citizens would have already stopped loving the laws of his country and would no longer be virtuous within his heart.

But in our modern governments where the constitution and civil laws encourage and ensure property, in our large states that must be wealthy to maintain their greatness and their power, it seems that anyone who strives to become wealthier is useful to the state, and that anyone who is wealthy and wants to enjoy his life is a reasonable person. How is it conceivable that some citizens, as they seek to enrich themselves and enjoy their wealth, ruin the state and lose their morality?

One must remember the main objectives of government to resolve this difficulty.

Governments must protect the property of each citizen. But since they must aim at maintaining the whole and at ensuring the advantages of the greatest number of people while maintaining and even arousing the love of property and the desire to increase and to enjoy it among the citizens, they must also maintain and arouse a spirit of community—a patriotic spirit. They must pay attention to the ways in which the citizens want to enrich themselves and to the ways they are able to enjoy their riches. The means people use to enrich themselves must contribute to the state's wealth, and the ways people enjoy their riches must be useful to the state. Each property must serve the community. The well-being of one category of citizens must not be sacrificed to the well-being

of another. Finally, luxury and the passions leading to it must be subordinated to a spirit of community and to the goods of the community.

The passions leading to luxury are not the only ones necessary in citizens; they must be joined to other passions—ambition, love of glory, honor.

All these passions must be subordinated to a spirit of community; it alone can maintain them in order, and without it, they would lead to frequent injustices and wreak havoc.

None of these passions must destroy the others; there must be a balance between them. If luxury had extinguished these passions, it would have become licentious and harmful, and then it would not have been in accordance with a spirit of community; but it remains subordinated to that spirit unless the administration has severed the link between them, unless the administration has destroyed the spirit of community in a nation where there is wealth, industry, and luxury.

Finally, wherever I see that luxury is dissolute, wherever I see the desire for wealth and its use running contrary to good morals and to the good of the state, I will say that the spirit of community—that necessary basis upon which all the motivating forces of society must act—was dashed because of the errors of government. I shall say that luxury, which is useful under a good administration, becomes dangerous only through the ignorance and ill will of the administrators. And I shall examine luxury in nations where good order is in force and in those where it has become weak.

First, I see how agriculture was abandoned in Italy under the first emperors and how all the provinces in the centre of the Roman empire became covered with parks, country cottages, planted woods, and large roads. I say to myself that before freedom was lost and the constitution overthrown, the leading senators—devoured by love of their homeland and devoted to increasing its strength and population—would never have bought the possessions of farmers to turn them into objects of luxury, and would never have converted their useful farms into country cottages. I am even convinced that if the Italian countryside had not been parcelled out several times among the soldiers of Sylla, Caesar, and Augustus, who did not bother to cultivate it, Italy would have preserved its agriculture for a long time, even under the emperors.

I then turn my focus to kingdoms where the greatest luxury reigns and where the countryside has become a desert. But before ascribing this misfortune to the luxury of the cities, I ask myself how the administrators of those kingdoms acted, and I see that their conduct has led to the depopulation so often attributed to luxury, and to the abuse of luxury itself.

If in those countries the inhabitants of the countryside were overburdened with taxes and tasks [*corvées*];<sup>4</sup> if they often felt anxiety and humiliation from the abuse of a legitimate authority; if the circulation of their commodities were stopped by monopolies; if those mistakes and others I will not mention here were made, a part of the rural population would leave to seek their livelihood in the cities. Those wretches found luxury there and, by devoting themselves to its service, have managed to live in their homeland. As luxury kept the inhabitants of the countryside occupied in the cities, it merely delayed the depopulation of the state; I say “delayed” and not “prevented,” because there are few marriages in destitute parts of the countryside, and even fewer among that category of men who seek refuge from the countryside in the cities. They arrive there to learn the crafts that create luxury, and they need a long time before they are able to support their families through their work. They miss opportunities when nature strongly calls to the union of the sexes, and debauchery diverts them even more from a legitimate union. Those who decide to take on a master are always in an uncertain situation. They have neither the time nor the willpower to get married; but if one of them becomes established, he owes it to the luxury and prodigality of the opulent.

The oppressiveness of the countryside suffices to account for an extreme inequality of wealth whose origin is attributed to luxury—even though the latter alone could on the contrary restore a sort of equilibrium of fortunes. The peasant who is oppressed is no longer a landowner; he sells his forefathers’ land to the master he gave himself, and all the possessions of the state pass imperceptibly to an ever smaller number of hands.

In a country where the government falls into such great mistakes, it is not luxury that extinguishes the love of one’s country or makes the wretched citizens hate it; other citizens are taught that those who run the

4. [The *corvée* was a compulsory labor burden imposed by the local lord or by the state in Old Regime France.]

country are indifferent about its fate, and that is enough to ensure that no one will love it with ardor.

There are countries where government has taken other measures to increase the inequalities of wealth and where exclusive privileges were given to, and maintained for, the directors of several manufactures, several citizens for the exploitation of colonies, and a few companies so that they alone could maintain a wealthy trade. In other countries, those mistakes were compounded by another—that of making the financial, legally binding charges excessively lucrative.

All these means gave birth to odious and sudden fortunes. If the fortunate men who made them had not lived in the capital before becoming rich, they would have come there afterward, as the center of power and pleasures. The only things left to desire are credit and gratifications [*jouissances*], and they seek those in the capital. One must see what the gathering of so many opulent men in the same place brings about.

People in society constantly compare themselves with one another. They endlessly try to establish the idea of their superiority, first in their own minds, and then in the minds of others. This rivalry becomes more intense between men of similar qualities. There is only one government—that of Sparta—that made wealth useless, where men could not boast about their wealth. As soon as men make a virtue of their wealth, they must make an effort to appear wealthy; so that, for every category of men, there must come to be expenses excessive for each individual, and thus emerges a luxury that we describe as being of pure decorum [*de bienséance*]. Without that immense superfluity, each class believes it is destitute.

It must be observed that, almost all over Europe, the competition to appear wealthy and the respect for wealth must have emerged independently of the quite natural causes I have just discussed. In barbarous times, when trade was unknown and crude manufactures could not enrich their makers, only land represented wealth, and the only opulent men were the great landlords. Now, those great landlords were “lords of fiefs.” The laws of the fiefs—the right to be the only ones to possess certain things—kept wealth in the hands of the noblemen. But as the progress of trade, industry, and luxury created, as it were, a new type of wealth shared by the commoner, the people, accustomed to respecting wealth in

their superiors, respected it in their equals as well. They believed that they could equal the great by imitating their pomp; the great believed that they were witnessing the end of the hierarchy that had raised them above the people. They increased their expenses to preserve their distinctions, and it was at that very moment that this decorum luxury [*luxue de bienséance*] became costly for all classes and dangerous for manners and morals. That situation turned the desire to enrich oneself into an excessive cupidity; in a few countries, it became the ruling passion and suppressed the noble passions that were supposed not to destroy it, but to rule it.

When extreme cupidity motivates all hearts, fits of virtuous enthusiasm disappear, and extreme cupidity does not exist without the most excessively possessive spirit; then the soul dies, because it dies when it focuses on itself.

The hard-up government can reward only with huge sums of money those it used to reward with small marks of honor.

Taxes, already multiplied, are further multiplied and become a burden on land and essential industry, which is easier to tax than luxury—either because with its constant vicissitudes it escapes the government or because the wealthiest have the credit to free themselves from taxes so that it is morally impossible for them not to have more credit than they should have. The more their fortunes are sudden, excessive, and founded on abuse, the more they need credit and the means to obtain it. They attempt, successfully, to corrupt those whose task is to repress them.

In a republic, they tempt the magistrates and administrators; in a monarchy, they offer pleasures and wealth to the nobility, guardian of the nation's spirit and morals, as the magistrates are guardians of the laws.

One of the effects of the credit of wealthy people when wealth is unequally divided—an effect of the lavish use of wealth, an effect of the need we have of wealthy men, of the authority they have, of the pleasantness of their company—is the confusion of ranks I have already spoken about. It is thus that the tone, the decency, the distinction of each class, which do more to preserve the spirit of each class than one may think, are lost. When one no longer holds to the marks of one's rank, one is no longer attached to the general order. It is when one no longer wants to perform the duties of rank that one neglects the external appearances,

tone, and manners that would recall the idea of these duties one has toward others and oneself. Besides, one rules a people neither by reasonings nor by definitions; one must make an impression upon the senses and announce with distinctive marks the sovereign, the great, magistrates, and clergymen. Their external appearance must express power, goodness, gravity, and sanctity—what a man of a certain class, or a citizen clad in a certain dignity is or should be. As a result, if wealth were used to give the trappings of young lords to magistrates, the paraphernalia of indolence and affected costumes to warriors, dissolute airs to priests, the array of grandeur to simple citizens, that would necessarily weaken the impression that the presence of the men destined to rule the people are supposed to make upon them. With the proprieties of each class, one would witness the erasure of the general order down to the slightest trace; nothing could remind the wealthy of their duties, and everything would urge them to enjoy life.

From a moral point of view, it is inevitable that the use of wealth be contrary to good order, manners, and morals. When wealth is acquired without work through abuse, the *nouveaux riches* rapidly enjoy their quick fortunes, and at first they become used to idleness and to the need for frivolous dissipations. As they are hateful to most of their fellow citizens, to whom they were unfairly preferred, and whose own fortunes they hindered, they do not try to obtain what they cannot hope to obtain—their esteem and good wishes. It is especially the fortunes of monopolists, administrators, and collectors of public funds that are the most odious, and thus most susceptible to abuse. After sacrificing one's virtue and reputation for honesty to the desire of enriching oneself, one scarcely bothers to make virtuous use of one's wealth; one tries to conceal the origin of one's family and fortune under the pomp and display of luxury; one tries to lose in pleasures the memory of what one has done and what one has been.

Under the first emperors, men from a class other than those I have just discussed were gathered in Rome, where they had just brought back the spoils from the subjugated provinces. Patricians succeeded one another in the government of these provinces; many did not even live there but merely travelled there a few times. The quaestors would steal for themselves and for the proconsuls, whom the emperors liked to keep in Rome,

especially if they belonged to powerful families. There, the patricians could hope neither to receive credit nor to take part in the government, which was in the hands of emancipated slaves, so they gave themselves over to indolence and pleasures. Senators who bought security with debasement no longer displayed the strength and pride of ancient Rome. It was not luxury that had degraded them—it was tyranny, just as the passion for spectacles would not have found senators and emperors mounting a stage if that passion had not been preceded and aroused by the perfect disregard for any order, any decency, and any dignity.

If there were governments whose legislators had kept the great too much in the capital; if the latter had responsibilities, commands, and so on that gave them nothing to do; if they were not obliged to perform great services to merit their positions and honors; if emulation in work and virtues were not aroused within them; finally, if they were allowed to forget what they owed their homeland, contented in their wealth and status, they would abuse it in idleness.

In several countries in Europe, there is a type of property that demands neither care nor maintenance from its owners—the national debts. In big cities, this type of possession is likely to increase the disorders that are the necessary effects of extreme opulence combined with idleness.

See what kind of character luxury takes from those abuses, mistakes, and circumstances that nations find themselves in; and see what the characters of the different orders must be in such a nation.

Among the inhabitants of the countryside, there are no lofty feelings, little of that courage that attaches to self-esteem and to the awareness of one's powers. Their bodies are not strong. They have no love of a country that is for them only the scene of their debasement and of their tears. Among the craftsmen in the cities, there is the same meanness of spirit; they are too close to those who despise them to feel any self-respect. Their bodies, enervated by sedentary labor, are not capable of withstanding fatigue. In a government in which the majority of people groan under oppression, the laws, which ensure the security of all in a well-regulated government, are only an obstacle that deprives the majority of the hope for a better condition. They must desire greater license rather than the reestablishment of an order that says: here is the people; there are the other classes.



The intermediary class between the people and the great, composed of the main artisans of luxury—financiers, traders, and almost all those who occupy secondary positions in society—constantly works to move from a meager fortune to a greater one. Schemes and mischief are often its tools. When the habit of honest feelings no longer keeps within reasonable limits the cupidity and boundless love of what we call pleasures, when good order and worthy examples do not inspire people with abiding respect for honesty, the second order of the state usually combines the vices of the first and last orders.

As for the great, the wealthy without function, the decorated without occupation, their only motive is to escape boredom, which—as it does not even impart taste—leads the soul from one object to another, which amuses it without fulfilling or occupying it. In such a situation, one experiences not enthusiasm, but bursts of joy for anything that promises pleasure. In that flow of fashion, fantasy, and amusement, which do not last at all and which destroy one another, souls lose even the strength to enjoy things, and they become as incapable of feeling the grand and the beautiful as of producing it. Then, the point is no longer to know who is more estimable, Corbulo or Trasea, but rather who will receive preference, Pilade or Bathyllus.<sup>5</sup> It is then that Ovid's *Medea*, [Rufus] Varius's *Thyestes*, and the plays of Terence are abandoned for the farces of [Decimus] Laberius [105–43 B.C.]. Political and military talents progressively decline, as do philosophy, eloquence, and all the arts of imitation. Frivolous men who do nothing but enjoy themselves have exhausted the beautiful and now seek the extraordinary. Then, uncertainty, affectation, and childishness invade ideas of perfection; small souls amazed and humiliated by the powerful and the strong prefer people who are petty, farcical, ridiculous, and affected. The talented who are most encouraged are those who flatter vice and bad taste, and they perpetuate the general disorder, which was not brought about by luxury, but which instead corrupted luxury, manners, and morals.

5. [Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo (d. A.D. 67) was a Roman general who restored control over Armenia; P. Clodio Trasea Peto was a Stoic Senator who committed suicide rather than be executed by Nero in A.D. 66. Bathyllus was an Alexandrian youth noted for his graceful pantomime dancing; Pilade was a pantomime dancer in the Augustan age. Saint-Lambert appears to be drawing on a passage from Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.63.]

Disordered luxury destroys itself, exhausts its sources, and dries up its channels.

The idle men who wish to pass from one luxury to another without interval seek out the productions and industry from all corners of the globe; the works of their nations pass out of fashion in their countries, and craftsmen become discouraged. Egypt, the African coasts, Greece, Syria, and Spain provided Romans with luxury under the first emperors, and that was not enough.

The taste for excessive expense, spread to all classes of citizens, leads workers to demand excessive prices for their work. Apart from a taste for expense, they are obliged to raise the price of labor, because they live in great, opulent cities, where the bare necessities are never cheap. Soon, poorer nations of simpler manners produce the same things; and since they retail them at lower cost, they are the preferred retailers. The very industry of the nation—the industry of luxury—decreases; its power diminishes; its cities become depopulated; its wealth goes abroad, and in general, it is left with indolence, languor, and a habit of slavery.

After examining the character of a nation in which certain abuses reign in the government, after seeing that the vices of those nations are the effects less of luxury than of those abuses, let us now determine what must be the national spirit of a people that has all the luxury possible, but in which order is also kept by a wise and vigorous government, which pays equal attention to preserving both the true riches of the state and its manners and morals.

Those riches and manners are the fruit of the affluence of the majority, and especially the close attention the government pays to conduct all its operations for the common good—without exception of class or person—and to constantly display those righteous intentions to the public.

Everywhere, this majority is or should be composed of the inhabitants of the countryside—of farmers [*cultivateurs*°]. To be affluent, they must be industrious; to be industrious, they must be able to hope their work will earn a good living, and they must desire that it will. Those peoples sunk in apathy willingly make do with the bare necessities, such as the inhabitants of those fertile countries where nature offers everything and where everything languishes if the legislator does not introduce vanity and, in

due course, a bit of luxury. In villages and small market towns, there must be manufactures of implements, fabrics, and so on, which are necessary for the upkeep and even the coarse finery of the country people. Those manufactures will increase further the affluence and the population there. That was the plan of the great Colbert, who was too often accused of wanting to make the French a merely commercial nation.

When the inhabitants of the countryside are treated well, the number of proprietors imperceptibly increases among them; the extreme distance and base dependence of the poor upon the rich diminishes. As a result, those people will have lofty feelings, courage, strength of soul, robust bodies, and love of country; they will show respect and attachment for the magistrates, a prince, a [social] order, and laws to which they owe their well-being and their tranquillity. People tremble less before their lord, but they fear for their consciences, the loss of their possessions, their honor, and their tranquillity. They will sell their work to the wealthy at a high price, and the son of the honorable farmer [*laboureur*<sup>o</sup>] will not leave the noble work of his forefathers so easily to be sullied by the liveries and the contempt of the opulent man.

If the exclusive privileges I have talked about had not been granted, if the financial system did not enable people to amass riches, if the government did not encourage the corruption of the great, there would be fewer opulent men living in the capital, and those who did would not be idle; there would be few great fortunes, and no sudden ones; the means of enrichment, shared more widely among the citizens, would parcel out the riches naturally; extreme poverty and extreme wealth would be equally rare.

When men accustomed to work make great fortunes slowly and by degrees, they preserve a taste for work; few pleasures can distract them, because they enjoy work itself, and because a long time in strenuous occupations and in managing a moderate fortune have given them a love of orderliness and a moderation in their pleasures.

When men make their fortunes by honest means, they maintain their honesty; they maintain that self-respect that prevents them from giving themselves over to a thousand fantasies. When a man has served his fellow-citizens through the acquisition of wealth, or by bringing new

resources to the state, or by making a useful industry flourish, he knows his fortune is less envied than honored; and as he relies on the esteem and benevolence of his fellow citizens, he wants to keep both.

Among the city people—and, to a small extent, those in the countryside—there will be a certain search for commodities, and even for a decorum luxury. But it will always be attached to usefulness; and the love of this luxury will never degenerate into mad emulation.

In the second class of citizens, there will be a spirit of order and an aptitude for discussion that come naturally to people who take care of their own business. This class of citizens will look for something solid even in their amusements. They will be proud because bad morals will not have debased them. They will be jealous of the great who will not have corrupted them; they will keep an eye on their conduct and will be flattered to explain things to them. It is they who will spread the wisdom that will reach down to the people and up to the great.

The latter will have duties; those devoting themselves to war—which is their status—will learn it in armies and on the frontier; those intending to be part of government will spend a long time learning about it with diligence; and if financial rewards are never piled up by those performing the greatest services, if great positions, posts, or commands are never given to birth without service, if they are never without function, the great will not lose the feeling and the capacity for enlightenment in frivolous and idle luxury. Less tormented by boredom, they will wear out neither their own imagination nor those of their flatterers in the search for puerile pleasures and fantastic fashions. They will not display an excessive pomp, because they will have real prerogatives and a true merit for which the public will hold them to account. Less concentrated together, and with fewer opulent people by their side, their decorum luxury will not be excessive. Witnessing the interest that government takes in maintaining the order and well-being of the state, they will become attached to both order and well-being. They will inspire love of country and all the feelings of a severe and virtuous honor. They will be attached to the decency of manners and morals, and they will have the bearing and the tone of their condition.

Then, neither destitution nor the need for excessive expense will prevent marriages, and the population will increase; that is how one sup-

ports oneself, and how luxury and the wealth of the nation are maintained. This luxury is a representation, a convenience, and a fantasy; in all its different aspects, it combines all the arts that are simply useful and all the fine arts. But it will be kept within just limits by a spirit of community, a dedication to duties, a continual occupation that will leave no one in constant need of pleasure. It will be parcelled out, like wealth. And all the manners of enjoyment, all the objects most opposed to one another, will not be possessed by the same citizen. The different branches of luxury and its different objects will thus be set according to differences in status; the soldier will have beautiful weapons and expensive horses; he will be refined when he equips the troops entrusted to him. In his luxury, the magistrate will maintain the gravity of his estate; his luxury will be dignified and moderate. The merchant and financier will be refined in their conveniences. All classes will sense the importance of the fine arts and will enjoy them. But these fine arts will bring the minds of the citizens back to patriotic feelings and true virtues; they will not be merely objects of dissipation for them, but will present them with lessons and models. Wealthy people whose souls are lofty will elevate the souls of artists. They will not ask the latter for an affected Galatea, little Daphnis, a Magdalena, or a Jerome.<sup>6</sup> But they will suggest that they should represent Saint Hilary dangerously injured, as he shows his son the great Turenne lost for the fatherland.<sup>7</sup>

Such was the use of the fine arts in Greece before its governments became corrupted. It is still the way they are often used in Europe in wise nations that have not deviated from the principles of their constitutions. France has had Pigalle make a tombstone for the general who has just covered her with glory; her temples are full of monuments built for citizens who honored her; her painters have often sanctified their brushes by portraying men of virtue. England had the castle of Blenheim built to the glory of the duke of Marlborough;<sup>8</sup> her poets and orators constantly

6. [Galatea was one of the Nereids, or sea nymphs; Daphnis was a shepherd and nymph.]

7. [Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne (1611–75), marshal of France and hero of the Thirty Years War in its latter phases.]

8. [John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722), hero of the War of the Spanish Succession against Louis XIV.]

sing the praises of their illustrious fellow citizens, already so rewarded by the voice of the nation and the honors bestowed by the government. What strength, what patriotic feelings, what loftiness, what love of honesty, good order, and humanity are found in the poetry of Corneille, Addison, Pope, and Voltaire! If a poet sometimes celebrates indolence and voluptuousness, his lines become expressions used by a happy people in times of temporary exhilaration, which does not divert it from its occupations and duties.

Eloquence is marked by the feelings of a well-governed people; by its force and its charms it rekindles patriotic feelings when they are disappearing. Philosophy, which deals with the nature of man, politics, and morals, strives to spread useful knowledge about all parts of administration and its main duties, and to show society its solid foundations, which only error could undo. Let us revive within ourselves the love of country, of good order, and of laws. The fine arts will stop being debased, as they are when devoted to superstition and debauchery. They will deal with subjects useful to morals, and will treat them with force and nobility.

The use of wealth dictated by a patriotic spirit is not limited to base personal interests and false, childish pleasures, and luxury is not opposed to the duties of father, husband, friend, and man. When a rich man sees two poor young people whom he has just had married, and when he sees them happy on the threshold of their cottage, it delights him more deeply, more purely, and more durably than when he sees the ensemble of Salmacis and Hermaphroditis placed in his garden.<sup>9</sup> I do not believe that in a well-run state, and one therefore where love of country prevails, piles of money from China should make their owners as happy as is the citizen who willingly contributes out of his own fortune to the maintenance of a public road.

Luxury is not excessive in the multitude of its ends and means. Luxury is rarely excessive in England, even though in that nation, there are all the types of pleasure that industry can add to nature, as well as many rich individuals who procure them. Luxury has become excessive in France only since the misfortunes of the war of 1700 disturbed the

9. [Salmacis was a water nymph; Hermaphroditis was the son of Hermes and Aphrodite.]

finances and caused some abuses. There was more luxury in the finest years of the age of Louis XIV than in 1720, and [yet] in 1720 that luxury was more excessive.

Luxury is excessive whenever individuals sacrifice their duties and the interests of the nation to their own pomp, conveniences, or whims. And individuals are only led toward this excess by flaws in the constitution or errors in administration. In this regard, whether nations are rich or poor, enlightened or barbarous, does not matter; manners and morals will be depraved and luxury will take on their character as long as love of country and useful passions are not maintained. The people will prove to be weak, lazy, weary, and apathetic. The empire of Morocco is neither civilized nor enlightened nor rich; and [yet] a few fanatics who have been hired by the emperor, oppressing the people in his name and for themselves, have turned the people into a vile herd of slaves. Under the weak and abusive reigns of Philip III [r. 1598–1621], Philip IV [r. 1621–65], and Charles II [r. 1665–1700], the Spanish were ignorant and poor, lacking strong morals as they lacked industry; the only virtues they had kept were those religion must give, and even in their armies, there was a luxury devoid of good taste as well as an extreme poverty. In countries where a crude luxury prevails, without refinement or enlightenment, harsh and unfair treatments that the weakest endure everywhere at the hands of the strongest are more atrocious. Everyone knows about the horrors of feudal government and about the luxury of the nobles at that time. On the banks of the Orinoco,<sup>10</sup> mothers are filled with joy when they can secretly drown or poison their daughters, so as to shield them from the labors to which they are condemned by the ferocious laziness and savage luxury of their husbands.

A little emir, a nabab, and their main officers crush the people to maintain their numerous seraglios. A petty German sovereign ruins agriculture by the quantity of game he supports on his estates. A savage woman sells her children to buy a few ornaments and some brandy. Among civilized people, a mother makes lavish expenses and leaves her children without inheritance. In Europe, a young nobleman forgets the duties of status and indulges in our polite tastes and our arts. In Africa,

10. [A river in Venezuela.]

a young black prince spends his days sowing reeds and dancing. There you have what passes for luxury in those countries where morals become corrupted. But it takes on the character of nations rather than creates it; it is sometimes effeminate like them, and sometimes cruel and barbarous. I think that it is still better for peoples to obey frivolous epicureans than savage warriors, and better to nurture the luxury of enlightened, voluptuous rogues than that of ignorant heroic thieves.

Since the desires to enrich oneself and to enjoy one's riches are part of human nature as soon as man is in society; since those desires support, enrich, and vivify all large societies; since luxury is a good and by itself does no harm, it is essential that neither the philosopher nor the sovereign attack luxury in and of itself.

The sovereign will remedy the abuses and excesses that luxury may have attained when he reforms the errors or flaws in the constitution or the administration that have led to them.

In a country where wealth has been amassed in great quantities in a capital and is shared only among a few citizens who doubtless enjoy the greatest luxury, it would be completely absurd suddenly to oblige the opulent to diminish their luxury. That would shut off the channels by which wealth may circulate from rich to poor and reduce innumerable citizens who live on luxury to despair. Or else those citizens—craftsmen less attached to their homeland than farmers—would go abroad *en masse*.

With so widespread a commerce, such universal industry, a multitude of sophisticated arts, do not hope to return Europe to ancient simplicity; that would take it back to weakness and barbarism. I will demonstrate elsewhere how luxury adds to the happiness of humanity. I am proud that it follows from this article that luxury contributes to the grandeur and power of states, and that it must be encouraged, enlightened, and directed.

There is only one type of sumptuary law that is not absurd; namely, a law that taxes a branch of luxury derived from abroad or a branch of luxury that would give preference to one type of industry at the expense of others. There are even times when that law could be dangerous.

Any other sumptuary law is totally useless. When wealth is too unequal, when the rich are idle, when the patriotic spirit is extinguished, luxury will constantly pass from one abuse to another. If you suppress one of its means to exist, it will find a replacement opposed to the general good.



Princes who did not see the true causes of change in manners and morals have attacked this or that object of luxury—conveniences, fantasies, fine arts, philosophy; all have been forbidden in turn by Greek and Roman emperors. None of them wanted to see that luxury does not create manners and morals, but takes on their character as well as that of the government.

The first operation to put luxury back in order and reestablish the equilibrium of wealth is to bring relief to the countryside. A contemporary prince has, in my view, made a great mistake in forbidding the farmers of his country to settle in the cities. It is only when their situation is pleasant that it may be made a necessity, and then one may tax the surplus produced by luxury craftsmen without consequence, when they return to the countryside.

One must diminish the number of inhabitants in the capital only little by little, and only by obliging the men on site to take care of the duties that call them to the provinces.

If the rich must be separated, wealth must be divided. But I am not proposing agrarian laws, new divisions of property, or violent means. That there be an end to exclusive privileges for certain manufactures and certain types of commerce; that state finance be less lucrative; that expenses and profits be less concentrated in the same hands; that idleness be punished by shame or by loss of employment: Without attacking luxury itself, without even disturbing the wealthy very much, you will see wealth imperceptibly parcelled out and increased, and luxury increased and parcelled out like it, and everything restored to order. I sense that most of the truths contained in this article should be treated at greater length. But I compressed everything because I am writing an article and not a book. I beg my readers to rid themselves alike of the prejudices of Sparta and of Sybaris.<sup>11</sup> And if they apply a few points presented in this work to their age or to their nation, I beg them to consider their nation and their age the way I did—without favorable or unfavorable preconceptions, without fanaticism, and without personal bias [*sans humeur*].

11. [Sybaris, whose inhabitants were known for their luxurious living, is now Taranto, a city in southern Italy.]



*A View of the Progress  
of Society in Europe*  
1766

WILLIAM ROBERTSON was born in Scotland in 1721, the son of a Presbyterian minister. He entered Edinburgh University in 1733 and received his license to preach in June 1741. When both his parents died days apart in 1745, he delayed his marriage and took care of his younger siblings. His reputation for scholarship and for speaking ability grew, and in 1754 he was one of the original members of the Select Society, which included Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Monboddo, and Kames, among others. Though he would not attend the theater himself, he defended his friend John Home's play *Douglas* when it was condemned by the clergy (1756–57). He became a doctor of divinity in 1759, and his *History of Scotland* appeared in that year. Burke, Gibbon, and d'Holbach were among its admirers. A series of important church positions then ensued, leading to moderator of the general assembly, which post he held for sixteen years, starting in 1763. Simultaneously, he was principal of Edinburgh University, where he would govern for thirty-one years. His *History of Charles V* was published in 1762. Though some of his erstwhile friends did not like it as well as the Scottish history, it was well received on the Continent, by Voltaire and Catherine II of Russia, among others. His *History of America* was a sequel and appeared to great acclaim in 1777. He also wrote a work on ancient knowledge of India in 1784. The Academies of Madrid, Padua, and St. Petersburg honored him for his efforts. He died in 1793.

The excerpt here is section 10, with note xxix, of his *A View of the Progress of Society in Europe*. This was the introductory volume to the *History of Charles V* (Philadelphia: Bell, 1770), 3 vols., 1:66–70, 272–84. The note, which is at least as substantive as the text and is a distinctive feature of Robertson's method as an historian, is by the author and has been retained without revision.

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## A View of the Progress of Society in Europe

X. The progress of commerce had considerable influence in polishing the manners of the European nations, and in leading them to order, equal laws, and humanity. The wants of men, in the original and most simple state of society, are so few, and their desires so limited, that they rest contented with the natural productions of their climate and soil, or with what they can add to these by their own rude industry. They have no superfluities to dispose of, and few necessities that demand a supply. Every little community subsisting on its own domestick stock, and satisfied with it, is either unacquainted with the states around it, or at variance with them. Society and manners must be considerably improved, and many provisions must be made for public order and personal security, before a liberal intercourse can take place between different nations. We find, accordingly, that the first effect of the settlement of the barbarians in the Empire, was to divide those nations which the Roman power had united. Europe was broken into many separate communities. The communication between these divided states ceased almost totally during several centuries. Navigation was dangerous in seas infested by pirates; nor could strangers trust to a friendly reception in the ports of uncivilized nations. Even between distant parts of the same kingdom, the intercourse was rare and difficult. The lawless rapine of banditti,

together with the avowed exactions of the nobles, scarce less formidable and oppressive, rendered a journey of any length a perilous enterprize. Fixed to the spot in which they resided, the greater part of the inhabitants of Europe lost, in a great measure, the knowledge of remote regions, and were unacquainted with their names, their situations, their climates, and their commodities.

Various causes, contributed to revive the spirit of commerce, and to renew in some degree the intercourse between different nations. The Italians, by their connection with Constantinople and other cities of the Greek empire, preserved in their own country some relish for the precious commodities, and curious manufactures of the East. They communicated some knowledge of these to the countries contiguous in Italy. This commerce, however, was extremely limited, nor was the intercourse considerable which it occasioned between different nations. The Crusades, by leading multitudes from every corner of Europe into Asia, opened a more extensive communication between the East and West, which subsisted for two centuries; and though the object of these expeditions was conquest and not commerce; though the issue of them proved as unfortunate, as the motives for undertaking them were wild and enthusiastic, their commercial effects, as hath been shewn, were both beneficial and permanent. During the continuance of the Crusades, the great cities in Italy and in other countries of Europe acquired liberty, and together with it such privileges as rendered them respectable and independent communities. Thus, in every state there was formed a new order of citizens, to whom commerce presented itself as their proper object, and opened to them a certain path to wealth and dignity. Soon after the close of the Holy war, the mariner's compass was invented, which, by rendering navigation more secure as well as more adventurous, facilitated the communication between remote nations, and brought them nearer to each other.

The Italian States, during the same period, established a regular commerce with the East in the ports of Egypt, and drew from thence all the rich products of the Indies. They introduced into their own territories manufactures of various kinds, and carried them on with great ingenuity and vigour. They attempted new arts; and transplanted from warmer cli-

mates, to which they had been hitherto deemed peculiar, several natural productions which now furnish the materials of a lucrative and extended commerce. All these commodities, whether imported from Asia, or produced by their own skill, they disposed of to great advantage among the other people of Europe, who began to acquire some taste of elegance unknown to their ancestors, or despised by them. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the commerce of Europe was almost entirely in the hands of the Italians, more commonly known in those ages by the name of Lombards. Companies or societies of Lombard merchants settled in every different kingdom. They were taken under the immediate protection of the several governments. They enjoyed extensive privileges and immunities. The operation of the ancient barbarous laws concerning strangers was suspended with respect to them. They became the carriers, the manufacturers, and the bankers of all Europe.

While the Italians, in the south of Europe, cultivated trade with such industry and success, the commercial spirit awakened in the north, towards the middle of the thirteenth century. As the nations around the Baltick were, at that time, extremely barbarous, and infested that sea with their piracies, this obliged the cities of Lubeck and Hamburgh, soon after they began to open some trade with these people, to enter into a league of mutual defence. They derived such advantages from this union, that other towns acceded to their confederacy, and, in a short time, eighty of the most considerable cities scattered through those vast countries which stretch from the bottom of the Baltick to Cologne on the Rhine, joined in the famous Hanseatick league, which became so formidable, that its alliance was courted, and its enmity was dreaded by the greatest monarchs. The members of this powerful association formed the first systematick plan of commerce known in the middle ages, and conducted it by common laws enacted in their general assemblies. They supplied the rest of Europe with naval stores, and pitched on different towns, the most eminent of which was Bruges in Flanders, where they established staples in which their commerce was regularly carried on. Thither the Lombards brought the productions of India, together with the manufactures of Italy, and exchanged them for the more bulky, but not less useful commodities of the North. The Hanseatick

merchants disposed of the cargoes which they received from the Lombards, in the ports of the Baltick, or carried them up the great rivers into the interior parts of Germany.

This regular intercourse opened between the North and South of Europe, made them sensible of their mutual wants, and created such new and vast demands for commodities of every kind, that it excited among the inhabitants of the Netherlands a more vigorous spirit in carrying on the two great manufactures of wool and flax, which seem to have been considerable in that country as far back as the age of Charlemagne. As Bruges became the centre of communication between the Lombard and Hanseatick merchants, the Flemings traded with both in that city to such extent as well as advantage, as spread among them a general habit of industry, which long rendered Flanders and the adjacent provinces the most opulent, the most populous, and best cultivated countries in Europe.

Struck with the flourishing state of these provinces, of which he discerned the true cause, Edward III. of England endeavoured to excite a spirit of industry among his own subjects, who, blind to the advantages of their situation, and ignorant of the source from which opulence was destined to flow into their country, totally neglected commerce, and did not even attempt those manufactures, the materials of which they furnished to foreigners. By alluring Flemish artisans to settle in his dominions, as well as by many wise laws for the encouragement and regulation of trade, he gave a beginning to the woollen manufactures of England, and first turned the active and enterprizing genius of his people towards those arts which have raised the English to the highest rank among commercial nations.

This increase of commerce, and of intercourse between nations, how inconsiderable soever it may appear in respect of their rapid and extensive progress during the last and present age, seems vast, when we compare it with the state of both in Europe previous to the twelfth century. It did not fail of producing great effects. Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men. It unites them, by one of the strongest of all ties, the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace, by establishing in every state an order of citizens bound by their interest to be the guardians of public tranquillity. As soon

as the commercial spirit begins to acquire vigour, and to gain an ascendant in any society, we discover a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negotiations. Conspicuous proofs of this occur in the history of the Italian States, of the Hanseatic league, and the cities of the Netherlands during the period under review. In proportion as commerce made its way into the different countries of Europe, they successively turned their attention to those objects, and adopted those manners, which occupy and distinguish polished nations.

## Note XXIX

The great variety of subjects which I have endeavoured to illustrate, and the extent of this upon which I now enter, will justify my adopting the words of M. de Montesquieu, when he begins to treat of commerce. "The subject which follows would require to be discussed more at large, but the nature of this work does not permit it. I wish to glide on a tranquil stream; but I am hurried along by a torrent."

Many proofs occur in history of the little intercourse between nations during the middle ages. Towards the close of the tenth century, Count Bouchard intending to found a monastery at St. Maur des Fosses, near Paris, applied to an Abbot of Clugny in Burgundy, famous for his sanctity, intreating him to conduct the monks thither. The language in which he addressed that holy man is singular: He tells him that he had undertaken the labour of such a great journey; that he was fatigued with the length of it, therefore hoped to obtain his request, and that his journey into such a distant country should not be in vain. The answer of the abbot is still more extraordinary: He refused to comply with his desire, as it would be extremely fatiguing to go along with him into a strange and unknown region. *Vita Burchardi venerabilis Comites ap. Bouquet Rec. des Hist. vol. x. p. 351.* Even so late as the beginning of the twelfth century, the monks of Ferrieres in the diocese of Sens did not know that there was such a city as Tournay in Flanders; and the monks of St. Martin of Tournay, were equally unacquainted with the situation of Ferrieres. A transaction in which they were both concerned, made it necessary for them to have some intercourse. The mutual interest of both monasteries

prompted each to find out the situation of the other. After a long search, which is particularly described, the discovery was made by accident. Herimannus Abbas de Restauratione St. Martini Tornacensis ap. Dacher. Spicel. vol. xii. p. 400. The ignorance of the middle ages with respect to the situation and geography of remote countries was still more remarkable. The most ancient geographical chart which now remains as a monument of the state of that science in Europe during the middle ages, is found in a manuscript of the Chronique de St. Denys. There the three parts of the earth then known are so represented, that Jerusalem is placed in the middle of the globe, and Alexandria appears to be as near to it as Nazareth. Mem. de l'Acad. des Belles Lettres, tom. xvi. p. 185. There seem to have been no inns or houses of entertainment for the reception of travellers during the middle ages. Murat. Antiq. Ital. vol. iii. p. 581, &c. This is a proof of the little intercourse which took place between different nations. Among people whose manners are simple, and who are seldom visited by strangers, hospitality is a virtue of the first rank. This duty of hospitality was so necessary in that state of society which took place during the middle ages, that it was not considered as one of those virtues which men may practise or not, according to the temper of their minds, and the generosity of their hearts. Hospitality was enforced by statutes, and those who neglected this duty were liable to punishment. Quicumque hospiti venienti lectum, aut focum negaverit, trium solidorum inlacione mulctetur, Leg. Burgund. tit. xxxviii. § 1. Si quis homini aliquo pergenti in itinere mansionem vetaverit sexaginta solidos componat in publico. Capitul. lib. vi. § 82. This increase of the penalty, at a period so long after that in which the laws of the Burgundians were published, and when the state of society was much improved, is very remarkable. Other laws of the same purport are collected by Jo. Fred. Polac Systema Jurisprud. Germanicae, Lips. 1733. p. 75. The laws of the Slavi were more rigorous than any that he mentions; they ordained, "that the moveables of an inhospitable person should be confiscated, and his house burnt. They were even so solicitous for the entertainment of strangers, that they permitted the landlord to steal for the entertainment of his guest." Quot noctu furatus fueris, cras appone hospitibus. Rerum Meeleburgicar. lib. viii. a Mat. Jo. Beehr. Lips. 1751. p. 50. In consequence of these laws or of that state of society which made it proper to



enact them, hospitality abounded while the intercourse among men was inconsiderable, and secured the stranger a kind reception under every roof where he chose to take shelter. This too proves clearly, that the intercourse among men was rare, for as soon as this increased, what was a pleasure became a burden, and the entertaining of travellers was converted into a branch of commerce.

But the laws of the middle ages afford a proof still more convincing of the small intercourse between different nations. The genius of the Feudal system, as well as the spirit of jealousy which always accompanies ignorance, joined in discouraging strangers from settling in any country. If a person removed from one province in a kingdom to another, he was bound within a year and a day, to acknowledge himself the vassal of the baron in whose estate he settled; if he neglected to do so, he became liable to a penalty; and if at his death he neglected to leave a certain legacy to the baron within whose territories he resided, all his goods were confiscated. The hardships imposed on foreigners settling in a strange country, were still more intolerable. In more early times, the superior lord of any territory, in which a foreigner settled, might seize his person, and reduce him to servitude. Very striking instances of this occur in the history of the middle ages. The cruel depredations of the Normans in the ninth century, obliged many inhabitants of the maritime provinces of France, to fly into the interior parts of the kingdom. But instead of being received with that humanity to which their wretched condition entitled them, they were reduced to a state of servitude. Both the civil and ecclesiastical powers found it necessary to interpose, in order to put a stop to this barbarous practice. Potgiesser, de Statu Servor. lib. i. c. 1. § 16. In other countries, the laws permitted the inhabitants of the maritime provinces, to reduce such as were shipwrecked on their coast, to servitude. Ibid. § 17. This barbarous custom prevailed in other countries of Europe. The practice of seizing the goods of persons who had been shipwrecked, and of confiscating as the property of the lord on whose manor they were thrown, seems to have been universal. De Westphalen Monum. inedita Rer. Germ. vol. iv. p. 907, &c. et Du Cange, voc *Laganum*, Beehr. Rer. Meeleb. lib. p. 512. Among the ancient Welsh, three sorts of persons, a madman, a stranger, and a leper, might be killed with impunity. Leges Hoel Dda, quoted in observat. on the Statutes, chiefly the more ancient,

p. 22. M. de Lauriere produces several ancient deeds which prove, that in different provinces of France, strangers became the slaves of the lord on whose lands they settled. Glossaire du Droit Francois, Art. *Aubaine*, p. 92. Beaumanoir says, "that there are several places in France, in which, if a stranger fixes his residence for a year and a day, he becomes the slave of the lord of the manor. Coust. De Beauv. ch. 45. p. 254. But as a practice so contrary to humanity could not subsist, the superior lords found it necessary to rest satisfied with levying certain annual taxes from aliens, by imposing upon them some extraordinary duties or services. But when any stranger died, he could not convey his effects by a will; and all his real as well as personal estate fell to the king, or to the lord of the barony, to the exclusion of his natural heirs. This is termed in France Droit d'Aubaine. Pref. de Laurier. Ordon. tom. i. p. 15. Brussel. tom. ii. p. 944. Du Cange, voc. *Albani*. Pasquier Recherches, p. 367. This practice of confiscating the effects of strangers upon their death, was very ancient. It is mentioned, though very obscurely, in a law of Charlemagne, A.D. 813. Capitul. Baluz. p. 507. § 5. Not only persons who were born in a foreign country were subject to the Droit d'Aubaine, but even such as removed from one diocese to another, or from the lands of one baron to another. Brussel. vol. ii. p. 947, 949. It is scarce possible to conceive any law more unfavourable to the intercourse between nations. Something similar to it, however, may be found in the ancient laws of every kingdom in Europe. With respect to Italy, see Murat. Ant. vol. ii. p. 14. It is no small disgrace to the French jurisprudence, that this barbarous, inhospitable custom, should still remain in a nation so highly civilized.

The confusion and outrage which abounded under a feeble form of government, incapable of framing or executing salutary laws, rendered the communication between the different provinces of the same kingdom extremely dangerous. It appears from a letter of Lupus, abbot of Ferrieres, in the ninth century, that the highways were so much infested by banditti, that it was necessary for travellers to form themselves into companies or caravans, that they might be safe from the assaults of robbers. Bouquet Recueil des Hist. vol. vii. 515. The numerous regulations published by Charles the Bald in the same century, discover the frequency of these disorders; and such acts of violence were become so common, that by many they were hardly considered as criminal; and for this

reason, the inferior judges called *Centenarii*, were required to take an oath, that they would neither commit any robbery themselves, nor protect such as were guilty of that crime. *Capitul. edit. Baluz. vol. ii. p. 63, 68.* The historians of the ninth and tenth centuries give pathetic descriptions of these disorders. Some remarkable passages to this purpose are collected by *Mat. Jo. Beehr. Rer. Meeleb. lib. viii. p. 603.* They became so frequent and audacious, that the authority of the civil magistrate was unable to repress them. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction was called in to aid it. Councils were held with great solemnity, the bodies of the saints were brought thither, and in presence of the sacred reliques, anathemas were denounced against robbers, and other violators of the publick peace. *Bouquet Recueil des Hist. tom. x. p. 360, 431, 536.* One of these forms of excommunication issued A.D. 988, is still preserved, and is so singular, and composed with eloquence of such a peculiar kind, that it will not perhaps appear unworthy of a place here. After the usual introduction, and mentioning the outrage which gave occasion to the anathema, it runs thus, “*Obtenebrescant oculi vesstri, qui concupiverunt; arescant manus, quae rapuerunt; debilitentur omnia membra, quae adjuverunt. Semper laboretis, nec requiem inveniatis, fructuque vestri laboris privemini. Formidetis, & paveatis, à facie persequentis, & non persequentis hostis, ut tabescendo deficiatis. Sit portio vestra cum Juda traditore Domini, in terra mortis et tenebrarum; donec corda vestra ad satisfactionem plenam convertantur. Ne cessent a vobis hae malidictiones, scelerum vestrorum persecutrices, quamdiu permanebitis in peccato pervasionis. Amen. Fiat, Fiat.*” *Bouquet. Ib. p. 517.*

With respect to the progress of commerce which I have described, it may be observed that the Italian states carried on some commerce with the cities of the Greek empire, as early as the age of Charlemagne, and imported into their own country the rich commodities of the east. *Murat. Antiq. Ital. vol. ii. p. 882.* In the tenth century, the Venetians had opened a trade with Alexandria in Egypt. *Ibid.* The inhabitants of Amalphi and Pisa had likewise extended their trade to the same ports. *Murat. Ib. p. 884, 885.* The effects of the Crusades in increasing the wealth and commerce of the Italian states, and particularly that which they carried on with the East, I have already explained in this volume. They not only imported the Indian commodities from the East, but

established manufactures of curious fabric in their own country. Several of these are enumerated by Muratori in his *Dissertations concerning the arts and the weaving* of the middle ages. *Antiq. Ital.* vol. ii. p. 349, 399. They made great progress particularly in the manufacture of silk, which had long been peculiar to the eastern provinces of Asia. Silk stuffs were of such high price in ancient Rome, that only a few persons of the first rank were able to purchase them. Under Aurelian, A.D. 270, a pound of silk was equal in value to a pound of gold. *Absit ut auro fila pensentur. Libra enim auri tunc libra serici fuit.* Vopiscus in Aureliano. Justinian, in the sixth century, introduced the art of rearing silk-worms into Greece, which rendered the commodity somewhat more plentiful, though still it was of such great value, as to remain an article of luxury or magnificence, reserved only for persons of the first order, or for public solemnities. Roger I. King of Sicily, about the year 1130, carried off a number of artificers in the silk trade from Athens, and settling them in Palermo, introduced the culture of silk into his kingdom, from which it was communicated to other parts of Italy. Gianon. *Hist. of Naples*, b. xi. c. 7. This seems to have rendered silk so common that about the middle of the fourteenth century, a thousand citizens of Genoa appeared in one procession clad in silk robes. Sugar is likewise a production of the East. Some plants of the sugar-cane were brought from Asia; and the first attempt to cultivate them in Sicily was made about the middle of the twelfth century. From thence they were transplanted into the southern provinces of Spain. From Spain they were carried to the Canary and Madeira isles, and at length into the new world. Ludovico Guicciardini, in enumerating the goods imported into Antwerp, about the year 1560, mentions the sugar which they received from Spain and Portugal as a considerable article. He describes that as the product of the Madeira and Canary islands. *Descritt. de Paesi Bassi*, p. 180, 181. The sugar-cane was either not introduced into the West-Indies at that time, or the cultivation of it was not so considerable as to furnish an article in commerce. In the middle ages, though sugar was not raised in such quantities, or employed for so many purposes, as to become one of the common necessities of life, it appears to have been a considerable article in the commerce of the Italian states.

These various commodities with which the Italians furnished the

other nations of Europe, procured them a favourable reception in every kingdom. They were established in France in the thirteenth century with most extensive immunities. They not only obtained every indulgence favourable to their commerce, but personal rights and privileges were granted to them, which the natives of the kingdom did not enjoy. Ordon. tom. iv. p. 688. By a special proviso, they were exempted from the droit d'aubaine. Ibid. p. 670. As the Lombards engrossed the trade of every kingdom in which they settled, they became masters of its cash. Money of course was in their hands not only a sign of the value of their commodities, but became an object of commerce itself. They dealt largely as bankers. In an ordinance, A.D. 1295, we find them stiled *mercatores* and *campsores*. They carried on this as well as other branches of their commerce with somewhat of that rapacious spirit which is natural to monopolizers, who are not restrained by the concurrence of rivals. An absurd opinion, which prevailed in the middle ages, was, however, in some measure, the cause, of their exorbitant demands, and may be pleaded in apology for them. Commerce cannot be carried on with advantage unless the persons who lend a sum are allowed a certain premium for the use of their money, and as a compensation for the risk which they run in permitting another to traffick with their stock. This premium is fixed by law in all commercial countries, and is called the legal interest of money. But the Fathers of the church preposterously applied the prohibitions of usury in scripture to the payment of legal interest, and condemned it as a sin. The schoolmen, misled by Aristotle, whose sentiments they followed implicitly, and without examination, adopted the same error, and enforced it. Blackstone's Commentaries on the laws of England, vol. ii. p. 455. Thus the Lombards found themselves engaged in a traffick which was deemed criminal and odious. They were liable to punishment if detected. They were not satisfied, therefore, with that moderate premium, which they might have claimed, if their trade had been open and authorised by law. They exacted a sum proportional to the danger and infamy of a discovery. Accordingly, we find that it was usual for them to demand twenty per cent. for the use of money in the thirteenth century. Murat. Antiq. Ital. vol. i. p. 893. About the beginning of that century, the countess of Flanders was obliged to borrow money in order to pay her husband's ransom. She procured the sum requisite, either from Italian

merchants or from Jews. The lowest interest which she paid to them was above twenty per cent. and some of them exacted near thirty. Martene and Durand. *Thesaur. Anecdotorum*. vol. i. p. 886. In the fourteenth century, A.D. 1311, Philip IV. fixed the interest which might be legally exacted in the fairs of Champagne at twenty per cent. Ordonan. tom. i. p. 484. The interest of money in Aragon was somewhat lower. James I. A.D. 1242. fixed it by law at eighteen per cent. Petr. de Marca. *Marca sive Limes Hispan*, app. 1433. As late as the year 1490, it appears that the interest of money in Piacentia, was at the rate of forty per cent. This is the more extraordinary, because at that time the commerce of the Italian States was become considerable. *Memoire Storiche de Piacenza*, tom. viii. p. 134. Piac. 1760. It appears from Lud. Guicciardini, that Charles V. had fixed the rate of interest in his dominions in the Low Countries at twelve per cent. and at the time when he wrote about the year 1560, it was not uncommon to exact more than that sum. He complains of this as exorbitant, and points out its bad effects both on agriculture and commerce. *Descritt. di Paesi Bassi*, p. 172. This high interest of money, is alone a proof that the profits on commerce were exorbitant.—The Lombards were likewise established in England, in the thirteenth century, and a considerable street in the city of London still bears their name. They enjoyed great privileges, and carried on an extensive commerce, particularly as bankers. See Anderson's *Chronol. Deduction*, vol. i. p. 137, 160, 204, 231, where the statutes or other authorities, which confirm this are quoted. But the chief mart for Italian commodities was at Bruges. Navigation was then so imperfect, that a voyage between the Baltick and Mediterranean could not be performed in one summer. For that reason, a magazine or storehouse half way between the commercial cities in the North, and those in Italy became necessary. Bruges was pitched upon as the most convenient station. That choice introduced vast wealth into the Low-Countries. Bruges was at once the staple for English wool; for the woolen and linnen manufactures of the Netherlands; for the naval stores, and other bulky commodities of the north; and for the Indian commodities, as well as domestick productions imported by the Italian States. The extent of its commerce in Indian goods with Venice alone appears from one fact. In the year 1318, five Venetian galeasses laden with Indian commodities arrived at Bruges, in order to

dispose of their cargoes at the fair. L. Guic. Descritt. di Paesi Bassi, p. 174. Galeasses were vessels of very considerable burthen. It was the greatest emporium in all Europe. Many proofs of this occur in the historians and records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But instead of multiplying quotations, I shall refer my readers to Anderson, vol. i. p. 12, 137, 213, 246. The nature of this work prevents me from entering into any long details, but there are some detached facts, which give an high idea of the wealth both of the Flemish and Italian commercial states. The Duke of Brabant contracted his daughter to the Black Prince, son of Edward III. of England, A.D. 1339, and gave her a portion which would amount to three hundred thousand pounds of our present money. Rymer's *Faeder*, vol. v. p. 113. John Galeazzo Visconti Duke of Milan concluded a treaty of marriage between his daughter and Lionel Duke of Clarence Edward's third son, A.D. 1367, and granted a portion equal to two hundred thousand pounds of our present money. Rymer *Faeder*. vol. vi. p. 547. These exorbitant sums so far exceeding what was then granted by the most powerful monarchs, and which appear extraordinary even in the present age, when the wealth of Europe is so much increased, must have arisen from the riches which flowed into these countries from their extensive and lucrative commerce. The first source of wealth to the towns situated on the Baltick sea, seems to have been the herring fishery; the shoals of herring frequenting at that time the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, in the same manner as they now resort to the British coasts. The effects of this fishery are thus described by an author of the thirteenth century. The Danes, says he, who were formerly clad in the poor garb of sailors, are now cloathed in scarlet, purple and fine linen. For they abound with wealth flowing from their annual fishery on the coast of Schonen; so that all nations resort to them, bringing their gold, silver and precious commodities, that they may purchase herrings, which the divine bounty bestows upon them. Arnoldus Lubecensis ap. Conring. de Urbib. German. § 87.

The Hanseatick league is the most powerful commercial confederacy known in history. Its origin towards the close of the twelfth century, and the objects of its union, are described by Knipschildt *Tractatus Historico-Politico Juridicus de Juribus Civitat. Imper. lib. i. cap. 4.* Anderson has mentioned the chief facts with respect to their commercial progress, the

extent of the privileges which they obtained in different countries, their successful wars with several monarchs, as well as the spirit and zeal with which they contended for those liberties and rights, without which it is impossible to carry on commerce to advantage. The vigorous efforts of a society attentive only to commercial objects, could not fail of diffusing over Europe new and more liberal ideas concerning justice and order wherever they settled.

In England the progress of commerce was extremely slow; and the causes of this are obvious. During the Saxon heptarchy, England, split into many petty kingdoms, which were perpetually at variance with each other, exposed to the fierce incursions of the Danes, and other northern pirates, and sunk in barbarity and ignorance, was in no condition to cultivate commerce, or to pursue any system of useful and salutary policy. When a better prospect began to open by the union of the kingdom under one monarch, the Norman conquest took place. This occasioned such a violent shock, and such a sudden and total revolution of property, that the nation did not recover from it during several reigns. By the time that the constitution began to acquire some stability, and the English had so incorporated with their conquerors as to become one people, the nation engaged with no less ardour than imprudence in support of their monarch's pretensions to the crown of France, and long wasted its vigour and genius in its wild efforts to conquer that kingdom. When by ill success and repeated disappointments, a period was at last put to this fatal frenzy, and the nation beginning to enjoy some repose, had leisure to breathe and to gather new strength, the destructive wars between the houses of York and Lancaster broke out, and involved the kingdom in the worst of all calamities. Thus, besides the common obstructions of commerce occasioned by the nature of the feudal government, and the state of manners during the middle ages, its progress in England was retarded by peculiar causes. Such a succession of events adverse to the commercial spirit was sufficient to have checked its growth, although every other circumstance had favoured it. The English were accordingly one of the last nations in Europe who availed themselves of their natural commercial advantages. Before the reign of Edward III. all the wool of England except a small quantity wrought into course cloths for home consumption, was sold to the Flemings or Lombards, and manufactured by them. Though



Edward, A.D. 1326, began to allure some of the Flemish weavers to settle in England, it was long before the English were capable of fabricating cloth for foreign markets, and the export of unwrought wool still continued to be the chief article of their commerce. Anderson *passim*. All foreign commodities were brought into England by the Lombard or Hanseatick merchants. The English ports were frequented by ships both from the north and south of Europe, and they tamely allowed foreigners to reap all the profits arising from the supply of their wants. The first commercial treaty of England on record, is that with Haquin King of Norway, A.D. 1217. Anders. vol. i. p. 108. But they did not venture to trade in their own ships to the Baltick until the beginning of the fourteenth century. *Ib.* 151. It was after the middle of the fifteenth before they sent any ships into the mediterranean. *Ib.* p. 177. Nor was it long before this period that their vessels visited the ports of Spain or Portugal. But though I have pointed out the slow progress of the English commerce, as a fact little attended to, and yet meriting consideration; the concourse of foreigners to the ports of England, together with the communication among all the different countries in Europe, which went on increasing from the beginning of the twelfth century, is sufficient to justify all the observations and reasonings in the text concerning the influence of commerce on the state of manners, and of society.



*On the Origin and Progress of  
a New Science*  
1768

PIERRE SAMUEL DU PONT DE NEMOURS, born in 1739, was the son of a Parisian clockmaker. A brilliant student from an early age, he was interested in everything from the natural sciences to literature. After coming to the attention of the Physiocrats in 1763, he quickly became active in editing the propaganda organs of the school, such as *Journal d'Agriculture* and *Ephémérides du citoyen*. He collaborated with provincial intendants such as Turgot in Limoges, and gained notoriety abroad among such rulers as Gustavus III of Sweden, Catherine II of Russia, the Margrave of Baden (who made him a counselor), and the king of Poland (who made him an education official). He became an intimate of Turgot in the 1760s, and especially during his ministry of 1774–76; he later edited Turgot's works, though not always faithfully.

After a brief exile upon Turgot's disgrace in 1776, he was charged by Vergennes with drafting a trade treaty with England and with supervising the diplomatic recognition of the new American republic. He became general commissioner of commerce in the 1780s. Elected a deputy to the Third Estate in the upheavals of 1789, he took positions during the Revolution that may be generally described as liberal but royalist—supporting the abolition of the hated salt tax (*gabelle*) but using his own journal to declaim against the radical drift of events that led to the seizure of the royal family in the *coup d'état* of August 10, 1792. His op-

position to the death sentence against the king (January 1793) led to a warrant for his arrest that summer, by which time he was in hiding. He was eventually arrested but was saved by the fall of Robespierre (July 1794).

During the Directory he took up the cause of the parents of *émigrés*. Arrested again and his presses smashed, he fled to the United States with his two sons, settling in New Jersey, where he farmed and planned a colony for persecuted *émigrés*. Vice President Jefferson had him draft a plan for public education. Under Napoleon, he returned to France in 1802, becoming president of the Chamber of Commerce. Scholarly and philanthropic works now occupied much of his time, though his well-known opposition to Napoleon's regime led to his selection as secretary of the provisional government in 1814 and counselor of state under the restoration monarchy. During Napoleon's brief return in 1815, however, the elderly man fled to Delaware to rejoin his sons. During bouts of insomnia, he translated Ariosto. He died in 1817; his son Eleutherius founded the industrial chemical company DuPont de Nemours.

The work translated here for the first time, *On the Origin and Progress of a New Science*, was first published in 1768. It is arguably the clearest, most concise introduction to the full range of Physiocratic thinking on the nature of an enlightened, interdependent, exchange-based economy and its moral and political implications. Even so, there are a number of terms that appear with self-conscious repetitiveness throughout the work, the most notable perhaps being *évidence*, by which the Physiocrats meant something like "self-evidence" or the quality of being self-evident. We have translated it in different ways here, depending on the context, but have signaled its appearance where necessary. The edition used is A. Dubois, ed., *De l'origine et des progrès d'une science nouvelle* (Paris: Geuthner, 1910; repr. from 1768 ed.). Unbracketed notes are by the author; bracketed notes are by the present editor.

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## On the Origin and Progress of a New Science

If, from one end of the world to the other, one casts a philosophical glance at the history of the most wonderful sciences, and if one considers how they emerged and came to be extended and improved, one will be surprised to note that that happened in the midst of the greatest obstacles, the most stubborn prejudices, the most bitter contradictions, the most formidable oppositions. One will find *Confucius* chased and threatened with death in China, *Pythagoras* obliged to conceal his doctrine behind a mysterious veil and to hide the truth from the people in order to preserve the freedom to develop it for a few adepts, *Democritus* thought to be mad and treated as such by the Abderitians, *Socrates* drinking hemlock, *Galileo* in the chains of the Inquisition, *Descartes* forced to seek refuge in the North, *Wolff* banished and sacrificed for eighteen years to the schemes of the *Langes* and the *Strablers*, etc.<sup>1</sup>

“Everything has been said,” “Everything is known,” “Do we claim that we are more clever than our fathers?” are banalities which laziness, ignorance, and vanity have in every age and every country loudly opposed to anyone who had the audacity, the genius, the talent, the good fortune to search for, uncover, and reveal useful truths.

It has been said many times that man is a credulous animal. That was a mistake. One should have said that children are credulous and man is opinionated. You will find no man who believes something different from what he learned in his tender youth—thoughtlessly and without sufficient grounds. It is, as I say, not a question of credulity, but of rou-

1. [The reference is to Confucius (551–479? B.C.); Pythagoras (c. 582–c. 507 B.C.); Democritus (c. 460–c. 370 B.C.), a Greek philosopher from Abdera, hence the reference to the Abderitians; Socrates (469–399 B.C.); Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), the Italian physicist, astronomer, and mathematician; and René Descartes (1596–1650), the French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist. The remainder of the paragraph probably refers to the important German philosopher Christian Wolff (1679–1754), the criticism of him by Joachim Lange (1670–1744), *Neue Schriften über die Angegebene Irrthümer welche in der Philosophie des . . . Wolffs enthalten seyn sollen* (Leipzig, 1736), and Christian Augustin Ernst Strähler (fl. 1754), *Kurze doch gründliche Widerlegung* (1754).]

tine and obstinacy. Look at a mature man; you cannot help noting that, far from being credulous, he falls rather on the opposite extreme. His soul is closed to new ideas. He is prone to deny everything he does not understand. Whether truth or error, he combats equally everything he has not heard of. There are a few exceptions concerning very superior men; but the very nature of those exceptions shows how rare they are.

Therefore, one should not be surprised, still less irritated when one meets people—even famous and studious people—who, carried away by the obvious facts they know, and conceiving only vague ideas of what they do not know, believe they are nearing the limits of possible human knowledge, and do not imagine that there might be a new science in Europe.

If one of those clever people said to you: “What are we lacking? What do we not know? We can measure the sky and the earth. We observe their revolutions. We calculate their movements. We forecast eclipses. We weigh the atmosphere. We know, assess, and use the force of the winds and waters. We have discovered that active fluid that, diversely found inside all bodies, constantly and with prodigious force disperses all its parts, while also—as it surrounds all bodies—compressing those parts and through its immense effort keeping them in the position bestowed upon them by Nature. In more than one case, we know how to govern the powerful action of this first motion and to imitate fire and thunder. All the properties of beings seem to be instruments prepared for our intelligence. We apply to our own use weight, motion, and the way one arises from the other. The greatest burdens are raised in the air by our weak, frail hands. A mineral transmits to iron a natural attraction toward a certain point on the globe, and that is enough to mark out a route on the immensity of the seas.” One should warmly applaud such grand ideas. And if you asked this same man what should be done to have a flourishing, wealthy, powerful political society, so that the families and the individuals which compose it should be as happy as possible? And if he answered: “This is not the subject of an exact science, and depends on innumerable variable conditions, which are difficult to sort out and assess,” you should not find this answer ridiculous, because it appears natural and sensible to those who utter it in good faith; and when you suggest questions people are not familiar with, it is up to you to judge in advance how few people know what they have not been taught by their

Masters. Just imagine that Montesquieu himself, worthy in all respects to educate mankind, has told us, like someone else, that the principles of Government must change according to the form of its constitution. Imagine that he had not taught us what is the primitive basis and the common object of any government's constitution, and yet you saw that great man use almost alone the extreme sharpness and superior sagacity of his mind to search for and invent particular reasons for the given cases.

However, men did not randomly gather into civil societies. It is not without reason that they extended the natural chain of reciprocal duties and submitted to a sovereign authority. They had and still have a purpose that is essentially marked by their nature to behave in that way. Now, their physical constitutions, and those of the other beings surrounding them, do not permit that the means for achieving this end be arbitrary; for there can be nothing arbitrary in physical acts aiming at a determined end. You cannot reach a point unless you take the road leading to it.

Therefore, there is one necessary path to approach as closely as possible to the object of associations among men, and of the formation of bodies politic. There is thus one order—natural, essential, and general—which comprises the laws that are constitutive and fundamental to all societies; one order from which societies cannot deviate without losing their status as societies, without the political order losing its coherence, without its members finding themselves more or less disunited and in a violent situation; one order that could not be entirely abandoned without dissolving society and eventually completely destroying mankind.

Here is what *Montesquieu* did not know. Here is what minor writers—the so-called political authors, who thought they could follow in the footsteps of this great genius—were even further from grasping than he. Here is what many worthy men well learned in all the fields of knowledge we listed at the beginning of this essay know absolutely nothing about.

Ignorance, like all things in this world, tends to feed on itself. Our [ignorance] about those most important of all truths for men united in societies was supported and nurtured by a great number of external causes that it is unnecessary to develop here. We do not know how long it would have lasted; but one may infer from the resistance it offers today to the emerging enlightenment that it was of hardy temperament.

Thirteen years ago or so, a man of great genius,<sup>2</sup> who was used to profound meditations, and was already known for his excellent works and successes in an art where the greatest skill consists in observing and respecting nature, divined that nature does not limit its physical laws to those that have been studied up to now in our schools and in our Academies; and that when it gives ants, bees, and beavers the capacity to submit themselves by common accord and from their own interests to a good, stable, and uniform government, it does not deny man the capacity to raise himself to the enjoyment of the same advantage. Animated by the importance of this insight, and by the prospect of the great consequences to be drawn from it, he devoted all the intelligence of his mind to search for physical laws relating to society, and he eventually managed to reach the unshakable basis of those laws, to grasp them all together, to show how they derived from one another, and to extract and demonstrate their results. All this was a brand new doctrine, far removed from the prejudices adopted by general ignorance and far beyond the grasp of the common man, whose habit as a child of stuffing his memory prevents him from using his judgment.

And yet the time was not completely unpropitious for publishing that doctrine. The famous M. de Gournay, Intendant of Commerce,<sup>3</sup> guided like Quesnay only by the soundness of his genius, arrived at the same time, though by a different route, at many of the same practical results. He began to present them to the supreme Administrators, and, by his conversations and advice, to train young and worthy Magistrates who are today the honor and hope of the Nation; whereas Quesnay contributed to the *Encyclopédie* the words “Farmers” and “Grains,” the first public works in which he began to present the Science he had discovered. Soon afterward, he invented the *Economic Chart* [*Tableau économique*]<sup>3</sup>—that astonishing formula, which describes the birth, distribution, and reproduction of riches, and which enables us to calculate so surely, rapidly, and

2. François Quesnay, Squire, former permanent Secretary of the Royal Academy of Surgeons, member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, of the Royal Society of London, of the Academy of Lyon, etc., etc. First ordinary Physician and Adviser of the King.

3. [See chapters 24 and 29 in the present volume.]

accurately the effect of all operations relating to riches. That formula, its explanation, and the *General principles of economic government*, which the Author added, were printed with learned footnotes in the Château de Versailles in 1758.<sup>4</sup>

Three men equally worthy of being friends of the inventor of the Science and the Economic Chart—M. de Gournay, M. *le Marquis* de Mirabeau, and M. Mercier de la Riviere<sup>5</sup>—became intimate friends with him at that time. There was every reason to hope for a rapid progress of the new Science from the cooperation of three such talented men with its creator. But an early death prevented M. de Gournay from fulfilling the wishes and making the happiness of his country. M. de la Riviere was appointed *Intendant of Martinique*, and his zeal and diligence in serving his country with useful operations, constantly guided by the luminous principles he was familiar with, did not enable him during his whole term of office to occupy himself with transmitting to others the evidence of those principles which guided his immense daily work. The virtuous Friend of Mankind remained the only one to assist the creative spirit of this most useful Science to the human race by publicly retracting errors which had escaped him in his *Treatise on Population*. This was a generous deed, which was enough to serve as a scale to compare the strong mind, honest heart, and noble soul of this true citizen on the one hand, and the weakness, base pride, and deceitful ploys of a few contemporary writers on the other, whose errors were greater and much more dangerous, but who—even haunted by obvious facts [*évidences*]<sup>6</sup>—wanted to convince their readers that they had never been wrong, and that they had no responsibility toward anyone for knowing truths contradicting their previous opinions, which they try in vain today to combine.

The *Friend of Mankind* had not only to admit that he had mistaken consequences for principles; he had to correct his errors by publishing truths. That is what he did. His fruitful pen produced a *New Introduc-*

4. Those works can be found with a *Treatise on Natural Order*, a few *Issues*, and a few *Economic Dialogues*, by the same author, in a collection entitled, *Physiocracy*, published by Merlin, Rue de la Harpe, Paris.

5. [Victor Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau (1715–89), chief protégé of Quesnay and author of *L'Ami des hommes*, hence the sobriquet “friend of mankind”; Pierre-Paul Le Mercier de la Rivière (1720?–1793 or 1794).]



tion to his *Report on Provincial Estates*, a refutation of the critical review someone working in Finance had written about that report, an eloquent *Speech on Agriculture* addressed to the Society of Bern, an excellent work on *Compulsory Labor*, explanatory comments on the *Economic Chart*, the *Theory of Taxation*, the *Rural Philosophy*, etc., etc.<sup>6</sup> A few Authors, trained by his lessons and by those of the Master he had adopted, and carried away by the obviousness [*évidence*] of their doctrine, started to follow in their footsteps. Whole Bodies, and respectable Bodies—the Académie des Sciences et Belles-Lettres in Caen, the Société Royale in Orléans—studied the new Science and proclaimed themselves its defenders.

That was the situation for this Science, unknown for so long, when M. de la Riviere came back from Martinique, to hasten and quicken its progress. Soon he had resumed the research that had occupied him before his journey. In passing, he added a few Reports to the Journal on Commerce under the name of M. G., and eventually wrote the Book entitled: *The natural and essential Order of political Societies*, which has just been published by Dessaint, rue du Foin S. Jacques, in Paris. This excellent Book keeps in its eloquent and closely argued Logic the very order it exposes to its Readers. Always clear and evident for strong minds, he has the supreme art of making himself understood by weak minds, by seizing how the most neglected truths are intimately linked to the most well-known truths. He presents their union with an evidence so naive that everyone imagines that he is the first to have thought of things he never dreamed about. It is this sublime naiveté—which destroys sophisms, and irresistibly drives *évidence* into your head—that the Friends of the Author call *the simplicities of M. de la Rivière*. Each of these *simplicities* is a stroke of genius.

I would be very happy if I could present here justly, clearly, and rapidly the main truths, whose chain—discovered by Doctor Quesnay—is so exceptionally well and clearly developed in that sublime Book. The deep conviction they have brought to my soul for so long prevents me from resisting the desire to attempt this enterprise, which may be beyond

6. Since then he has published the Summary of that great and profound work under the title *Elements of Rural Philosophy*. Copies of it can be found at Desaint, Bookshop, rue du Foin S. Jacques.

my capacities. But before yielding to this pressing desire, I think I must warn my Readers with a reflection I will draw from the August 1766 issue of the old *Journal of Agriculture, Commerce and Finance*, p. 88:<sup>7</sup> *It would be as imprudent to judge a work by even the best and most faithful extract as to judge the beauty of a painting by the outline of its copy, or a body by its skeleton.*

## Section I

There is a natural Society, which preceded any convention among men, and is founded on their constitution, their physical needs, and their evident common interest.

In that primitive state, men have reciprocal rights and duties with an *absolute* justice, because they are of physical nature, and therefore *absolute* for their existence.

*There are no rights without duties, and no duties without rights.*

The *rights* of each man, anterior to all convention, are the *liberty* to provide for his subsistence and well-being, and the *property* in his person and in the things acquired by the labor of his person.

His *duties* are to work to provide for his needs, and to respect the liberty, the personal property, and the mobile property of others.

Conventions can be made among men only for the acknowledgment and mutual guarantee of those rights and duties established by God himself.

There is thus a natural and essential order, to which social conventions are subjected, and that order is the one assuring men gathered in society the *enjoyment of all their rights by the observance of all their duties*. The exact and universal submission to that order is the sole condition, from which people may expect with certainty to have their share in all the advantages society can procure.

7. What we call the *former* Journal de l'Agriculture, du Commerce et des Finances, began in 1765, and ended in November 1766. The *new one* began in December 1766. It is known that both periodicals resemble each other only by their title.

## Section 2

The spontaneous productions of the earth and water are not enough either to maintain a large population or to provide men with all the satisfactions they like to enjoy.

However, the nature of man leads him inevitably to propagate his species, to procure his enjoyments, and to avoid sufferings and privations as much as possible.

Therefore, nature gives men the art of multiplying productions and agriculture to improve his condition, and to provide abundantly for the needs of growing families.

Agriculture can only be established by preparatory work and capital investment [*avances foncieres*], essential preliminaries to annual operations. Those investments must be perpetually maintained, and expenses must be perpetually renewed; that is what we properly call agriculture [*culture*].

Before tilling the land, one must cut trees, rid the ground of woods, pull out their roots; one must let out stagnant waters or waters that wash the soil between two lands; one must prepare buildings to store harvests, etc. etc.

In using his *own self* and his *mobile resources* for the works and expenses preparatory to cultivation, man acquires the *ownership* of the land he has worked on. If he was deprived of that land, his work and the resources he used for tilling it would be taken away from him; that would be a violation of his *personal property* and of his *mobile property*.

By acquiring *ownership of the land*, man acquires the *ownership of the fruit* produced by that land. This ownership of the fruit is the purpose of all the expense and work done to acquire or create landed property. Without it, nobody would engage in such work and expense; there would be no Landlords, and the land would lie fallow, to the great detriment of the present and future population.

If man, having become a landlord through the lawful use of his personal and mobile properties, associates himself with another man to continue cultivating his land; or even if, after all those expenses, he arranges with someone else who takes care of all expenses of cultivation properly

speaking, a convention will be freely and naturally agreed upon, by which each Contracting party will enjoy a portion of the produce proportionate to his work and expense. As a result, the right to personal and mobile property of both will be wholly preserved.

### Section 3

We have just seen that, independent of capital investment [*avances foncières*], agriculture requires a constant stock of funds that, together with the land, form as it were the raw material of its operations—such as the plowing implements, carriages, working animals, and beasts providing manure for the land, etc., etc.

Those *primitive investments* in farming are perishable, and subject to sundry accidents. They must be constantly maintained, repaired, and renewed.

One must also cover the *annual expenses* demanded by wages and by the maintenance of all the men and animals whose work contributes to the exploitation of the lands.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that every year a sufficient sum be deducted on the value of the crops to maintain the *primitive investments*, and to provide for the *annual expenses of cultivation* for the following year; otherwise, farming would notably and progressively perish, and a proportionate decrease in the mass of renewable production and in the population would inevitably follow.

It is also necessary that this sum withdrawn on crops in favor of the long term, should not be so strictly measured by current expenses, so that it leaves Farmers [*cultivateurs*°] no means of withstanding great hazards caused by bad weather, such as frost, hail, blight, flooding, etc.; otherwise, those unavoidable accidents would deprive Farmers of the capacity to continue their work, and would destroy not only the crops of that year, but those of the following years as well.

Those sums, which must be devoted every year to perpetuate the harvests, are what are called the *farmers' withholdings* [*reprises des cultivateurs*].

The desire to assure a return on them is the purpose of the free agreements agricultural entrepreneurs make with Landlords.

## Section 4

When farmers' withholdings—those sums necessary to pay the expenses of farming for the following year and to maintain the investment funds that permanently exist in the form of cattle, implements, etc.; those sums whose annual use for tilling the land is imperiously required and determined by Nature—have been deducted from the harvest, there remains what is called the *net profit*.

This *net profit* is the share of *landed property*. It is the cost of expenses and operations for clearing, drying out, planting, building, etc.—everything done to ensure that the land can be tilled.

The greater this *net profit* is, the more advantageous it is to be a Landlord.

The more advantageous it is to be a Landlord, the more people you will find who devote money and work to create, acquire, extend, and improve landed properties.

The more people employ money and work to create or improve landed properties, the more farming is extended and improved.

The more farming is extended and improved, the more consumable production appears every year.

The more consumable productions are multiplied, the more men are able to procure satisfactions, and as a result, the happier they are.

The happier men are, the more the population grows.

That is how the prosperity of the whole of mankind is linked to the greatest possible *net profit*, to the best possible condition of the Landlords.

## Section 5

To achieve the greatest possible *net profit*, all works that lead to the growth and turnover of production must be done with as little expense as possible.

For these operations to be done with the least expense possible, there must be the greatest possible competition among those who make the investments and who bear the strain of that work. For with competition, each one strives to economize on his work expenses in order to deserve preference, and general economizing turns to the profit of all.

To assure the greatest competition among those who do the work, and among those who have the work done, there must be the greatest possible liberty in the use of all personal, movable, and landed properties, and the greatest possible security in the possession of what one acquires by the use of those properties.

One cannot in any way impede the free use of one's personal, movable, or landed properties without diminishing the net profit of farming, and therefore the interest one has in farming, and therefore farming itself, and therefore the stock of consumable productions, and therefore the population.

To commit that offence would be to declare war on one's fellow creatures, to violate the rights and fail in the duties established by the Creator, to oppose his Decrees as much as our weakness allows it, and to commit a human and divine crime of treason [*lèse-majesté*].

The general liberty of enjoying entirely one's property rights necessarily implies in each individual an entire security in the enjoyment of them, and prohibits—by the clear light of evidence—any use of the capacities of some against the properties of others.

*There is no property without liberty; there is no liberty without security.*

## Section 6

To have the greatest possible liberty in the use of personal, movable, and landed properties, and the greatest possible security in enjoying them, men gathered in society must mutually guarantee and reciprocally protect those properties with all their physical strength.

That guarantee and that mutual protection actually constitute *society*.

## Section 7

If, to preserve the mutual guarantee of property rights, all men had to keep vigil over the defense of their possessions and those of others, they would be in a condition less advantageous than the primitive state in which each one had only to maintain his own property. Therefore, there must be a tutelary authority that is vigilant for all, while each individual does his business.

For that authority to perform the duty it is entrusted with, it must be sovereign, and armed with a force superior to all the obstacles it could encounter.

It must also be unique. The idea that there could be several authorities in the same State is completely absurd. If they are equal, there is no authority; there can only be more or less anarchy. If one of them is superior, that one is the authority; the others are nothing.

## Section 8

The sovereign authority is not established to *make Laws*; for *Laws* are already made by the hand of the one who created *rights* and *duties*.

The *social Laws* established by the Supreme Being prescribe only the preservation of *property rights*, and of the *liberty* that is inseparable from it.

The Sovereign Ordinances called *Positive Laws* must only be *declaratory acts of those Laws essential to social order*.

If Sovereign Ordinances were contradictory to the *Laws of social order*, if they forbade the respect of property, if they commanded the burning of crops, if they prescribed the sacrifice of small children, they would not be *Laws*, they would be insane acts which would not be obligatory for anyone.

There is thus a natural and unimpeachable Judge of the Sovereign Ordinances; and that Judge is *the evidence of their conformity or opposition to the natural Laws of social order*.

One must have extreme respect for and complete obedience to the *Laws*, because they are advantageous for all, and because men would be obliged to submit to them through an *intimate religious conviction*, even if

those laws had not been promulgated by the Sovereign, and even if he had not used all the power of his beneficent authority to have them observed.

Sovereigns are obliged to promulgate the *natural Laws essential to social order by positive Decrees*, and they have the right to carry out that sacred function. As they are the guardians of all social forces, only they may *declare open war* on behalf of society upon those who violate its members' rights.

Thus, what we call *legislative power*, which is not that of *creating*, but that of *declaring Laws*, and of assuring their observance, belongs exclusively to the Sovereign; for the *executive Power* belongs exclusively to the Sovereign, by the very nature of sovereignty.

These two powers cannot be separated without disorder; for the right to command would become useless without the power to be obeyed.

## Section 9

Because the Sovereign has the legislative and the executive power, the function of judging citizens is incompatible with Sovereignty.

It is incompatible with Sovereignty; for judging how the law should be applied to particular cases entails an investigation into innumerable particular facts, which the Sovereign cannot accomplish.

It is incompatible with Sovereignty; for it would deprive Sovereignty and the Laws of their sacred character. It would expose the Sovereign to all possible seductions, and to the perpetual suspicion of all possible seductions. One would no longer know if he spoke as a Legislator or as a Judge. There would no longer be any true *positive Laws*, and all Decrees would be considered as momentary wishes.

It is incompatible with Sovereignty; for when any Sovereign were mistaken in his Judgment—as it is inevitable that any Judge will be sometimes given facts that are equivocal or difficult to certify—and all the more so for any Sovereign (who never has the leisure to examine sufficiently a case considering the numerous cases he is overwhelmed with), there would be no one to appeal to. And for having wanted to dispense justice, the Sovereign would then be deprived of the Power to have justice be dispensed.



There must therefore be Magistrates who are set up to apply the Laws, to examine disputes between Individuals—and even between the Sovereign as the protector of the Public, and Individuals accused of violating public order—and to declare after sufficient examination that *such and such a person is in such and such a case, on which the Law has pronounced*.

To assure that it is evident that the magistrates have sufficiently examined the cases submitted to their judgment, they must be subjected to forms which constantly demonstrate this examination.

The right to establish those forms belongs to the Sovereign, as a branch of positive legislation.

### Section 10

As Magistrates being charged with judging according to positive Laws and in conformity with prescribed rules fixed by positive Laws, and having to make decisions concerning the property, lives, and honor of their fellow citizens, they are religiously obliged to begin by judging positive Laws.

It is evident that a Magistrate would be culpable if he decided to deliver verdicts against his fellow men according to Laws that were *evidently unfair*.

Therefore, before setting themselves to judge according to Decrees, magistrates must compare the positive Decrees with the Laws of *essential Justice*, which regulate the rights and duties of each and are therefore the basis of social order.

Ignorance does not justify magistrates in not performing this examination and this comparison; for ignorance itself is a capital crime in a man who takes up a solemn office requiring *essentially* that those performing it not be ignorant.

### Section 11

The examination Magistrates are obliged to perform should not harm the Sovereign authority; for Sovereign authority is such only because it

is the depository of public forces, so that it has no other interest than increasing the available forces with the best positive Laws.

Sovereign authority is the depository of public forces and commands them, because the common interest carries such evidence that it wins over all wills.

It is that combining of wills and forces that constitutes the Sovereign power and authority.

That is why what is advantageous to the Subjects increases the power and authority of Sovereigns.

It would gravely insult Sovereigns by assuming them to be both unjust and insane, to suppose that they wanted to diminish their power and authority, by disuniting through evident injustices the wills and forces naturally inclined to support them.

When an error escapes Sovereigns in their positive Decrees, it can only be involuntary; and magistrates serve them usefully, faithfully, and religiously in having them note these involuntary errors.

## Section 12

In order that magistrates fulfill this duty that is inseparable from their position—i.e., the important function of verifying positive Decrees by comparing them to *natural Laws essential to social order*—they must, as we noted, be deeply instructed in those primitive laws that are fundamental to any society.

To ensure that magistrates are enlightened and well-informed about the natural laws of social order, one must be able to judge their level of study and their capacity in this regard.

To be able to judge the Magistrates' capacities, the Nation itself must be very enlightened about the reciprocal rights and duties of men united in society, and about the physical laws concerning the reproduction and distribution of riches.

To ensure that the Nation is sufficiently enlightened about those natural laws, a general public instruction about them must be established, and doctrinal works in that field must be favored; so that the least of the citizens can know at least a little bit about them, and that all those who

claim to be promoted to any sort of dignity have a deep, accurate, and complete knowledge of them.

### Section 13

The Sovereign authority can only fulfill its tutelary duties, guarantee everyone's property by forces superior to all those who would violate it, and cover the expenses of distributive justice and public instruction, by making expenditures—and considerable ones at that.

Society must therefore pay out those expenses, which are *essential* to preserve Society, to respect order, and to maintain the rights of property.

The portion of wealth paying for those public expenses is called *Taxes*.

*Taxes*, as the preservers of property, are the great link, the federative knot, the *sacred bond* of society. This is such an important matter that we will devote several paragraphs to explaining the natural laws concerning it.

### Section 14

It is not up to men to fix taxes according to their caprice; taxes have a foundation and a form *essentially* established by the natural order.

By "*it does not depend on men*," one means enlightened and reasonable men; for no one disputes that the ignorant are capable of falling into great errors. But then natural laws submit them to very harsh punishments inevitably attached to those errors, and that is all one means here.

Taxes must provide for ever recurring expenses; therefore they can only be collected from ever recurring riches.

Taxes should not even fall equally on all renewable riches. Nature denied those called the "farmers' withholdings" (see section 3) the capacity to contribute to Taxes; for it has imperiously imposed upon them the law of being used to maintain and preserve agriculture, under pain of seeing the progressive destruction of farming, crops, population, and Empires.

The share of harvests called *net profit* (see section 4) is thus the only one that may contribute to Taxes—the only one nature has decreed is appropriate to pay for them.

It is therefore part of the *essence* of Taxes to be a portion of the *net profit* of agriculture.

### Section 15

The purpose of Taxes is the preservation of property rights and the liberty of man in all their primitive and natural extent. Such preservation is the only way to ensure the proliferation of wealth and population.

Any form of taxes that would restrain property and the liberty of man, and that would necessarily diminish wealth and population, would then be manifestly opposed to the purpose of Taxes.

If Taxes on persons, commodities, expenses, and consumption were established, the collection of these taxes would be very expensive; their existence would impede the freedom of human work, and would necessarily increase the cost of Commerce and agriculture (see section 5).

This increase in the cost of commerce and agriculture, these high taxes between production and consumption, would not increase the wealth of any buyer or consumer, and could not lead anyone to spend more than his income.

They would thus force buyers to make bad offers for goods and raw materials, because of the taxes, the expensive collection of the taxes, and the increase in intermediary expenses that taxes and their collection would occasion for commerce and manufacturing.

They would thus necessarily diminish as much the cost of all first-hand sales.

The farmers [*cultivateurs*°] who make these sales would find themselves in *deficit* in their revenues, equal to the whole decrease in the price of their goods and raw materials.

They would thus be obliged to abandon the tilling of bad or mediocre lands, which, before the decrease in prices, had yielded very little or nothing beyond the expenses paid for tilling them, and which, because of that decrease in the value of the harvest, could no longer defray the necessary costs of cultivating them. This would lead to a first and palpable diminution in the stock of subsistence goods, in the well-being of the People, and soon in the population.

Farmers would also be obliged to withdraw a sum equal to the *deficit* in their revenues either from their landed incomes, or from the expenses in cultivation.

If farmers could withdraw that sum from their landed incomes (as would be fair, for those incomes are the only *available* ones, whereas the farmers' withholdings are *essentially* mortgaged to the tasks of reproduction), it is evident that in that case these landlords would bear the whole of the taxes on people, on operations, on goods, on commodities, as well as the expenses multiplied due to tax collection, and the decrease in value and the difficulties these taxes would create for the harvests.

It is equally evident that, in this case, the landlords would face higher expenses than if they had directly paid the treasury out of their income, without collection expenses, and without a decrease in the value of the production which represents the basis of their income—a sum equal to the one the Sovereign would withdraw from indirect taxes.

If farmers had commitments toward landlords that obliged them to pay them a fixed sum every year, they would be reduced to withdrawing expenditures from farming, because of the loss they would endure with the decrease in the prices of products, and the payment of indirect taxes and collection expenses they would be obliged to make.

Withdrawing productive expenditures would inevitably lead to a decrease in production. For the expenses necessary for farming are a *sine qua non* for harvests. These expenses cannot be eliminated without eliminating the crops; they cannot be diminished, without the harvests diminishing accordingly.

If the leases that engaged the farmers toward the landlords had to go for several more years, and if the former could not cancel them, degradation would become progressive, and all the more rapid as farmers would be obliged to pay the same rent and the same taxes *every year* on a crop weakened *every year* because of those expenses which farmers could only pay by cutting *every year* the expenditures for farming.

This degradation, which would be so fearsome for the population, would in the end fall upon the landlords and the Sovereign, either by the ruin of the agricultural entrepreneurs or by the expiration of their leases.

Those agricultural entrepreneurs still able to renew their leases, instructed by experience, would make such conditions as to compensate

themselves for their losses, or at least to avoid them in the future. As their diminished means would not allow them to run their farms as profitably as in the past, they would commit themselves only because of the incapacity brought about by the loss of some of their riches, the decrease in the prices of their first-hand sales, and the excess indirect taxes and collection costs.

The impoverishment of these agricultural entrepreneurs, and the ruin of those others who would no longer have the capacity to make advances for disbursements on their farms, would divert rich men from devoting themselves to a profession that would offer them only the prospect of losing their fortunes. The farming of the majority of lands would be abandoned to unfortunate laborers [*manouvriers*] without means whom the landlords would be obliged to support. Then it would be impossible to get strong beasts to perform tasks with strength and dispatch, as well as enough cattle to provide manure for the lands; there would be a dearth of the necessary fertilizers; there would not be enough repairs, and buildings and ditches would not be sufficiently maintained, etc.; the harvests, means of subsistence, population, the *net profit* that constitutes landlords' wealth, the public income that can only be a share of that *net profit* (see previous section), the power of the Sovereign, which is based on public income—all that would be almost entirely extinguished.

Indirect taxes, poor peasants. Poor peasants, poor kingdom. Poor kingdom, poor sovereign.

## Section 16

We have extended the previous paragraph to give an idea of the misfortunes Nations are exposed to, when they believe they can govern themselves or be governed arbitrarily; whereas nature has surrounded us with supreme Laws, and with a physical and inviolable chain of causes and effects that leaves our intelligence and our liberty merely the task of studying them, conforming our behavior to them, so that we may benefit from the advantages they offer us, and avoid the evils they would inevitably attract to us if we refused or neglected to enlighten ourselves about the order they constitute, and to submit ourselves to what it prescribes for us.

We have just seen that, when one wants to take an indirect route to levying taxes, they are still eventually paid by the *net profit* of landed capital. But they are paid in a way that is disastrous and much more costly for the landlords. They impede the liberty and restrict the property of citizens. They decrease the prices of products for first-hand sales. They diminish the stock of products, and even more the gross income of the territory. They bring misery and depopulation. They ruin by degrees agriculture, farmers, landlords, the Nation, and the Sovereign.

It is thus evident that indirect taxes would be entirely contrary to the purposes of taxes, of the establishment of Sovereign authority, and of Society.

It is thus evident that taxes must be directly collected on the net profit available from the landed capital. For then it will not disturb the legitimate and necessary schemes of the farmers, for whom it is a matter of indifference to pay part of the net profit to the Sovereign or to the landlords. The liberty of operations will remain wholly intact, and the prices of crops for the first sale will not diminish; for the order of expenditure will not be changed, and nothing will prevent them from returning directly to the land to put its products on sale, and the tutelary authority will merely replace the landlords in the disbursement of part of the available profit.

It remains only to examine what rules Nature indicates for the direct collection of the share that must go for taxes in the net profit of the territory.

## Section 17

First, it is evident that with net profit, the proportion of taxes cannot be arbitrary.

It cannot be arbitrary on the part of the Sovereign authority; for then the Sovereign could invade all properties, he would no longer be regarded as their protector, people would be more inclined to distrust him rather than to obey him, and he would soon have no more authority.

That proportion must not be arbitrary on the part of the landlords either; for in moments of ignorance, a misunderstood interest could lead them to reduce the public revenue so as to harm the cohesiveness of

Society and the security of its constitution based on the preservation of property.

It is also evident that taxes cannot be invariably fixed to a determined sum of money. For a public revenue sufficient for a weak and beginning society would not be enough for an extended and wealthier society that has cleared and exploited a large territory. And the revenue necessary for a flourishing society would also become excessive, onerous, and destructive for that same society if exterior conditions or political errors reduce the *net profit* of agriculture, and thus bring it back to its state of primitive weakness.

It is a most fearsome opinion that leads to the belief that any State has to defend itself by submitting itself to taxes capable of paying for a public force roughly equal to that of the neighboring Peoples. This prejudice, which has increased and multiplied taxes in weak and poor Nations, for no other reason than weakness and poverty themselves, has caused the most dreadful evils the human species has ever experienced. Because of it, property has been sacrificed, and the foundations of society sapped, under pretext of protecting property and maintaining society. Because of it, taxes have become arbitrary, and have known no limits but those a disordered imagination have given to ceaselessly exaggerated public necessity. It would have led people to wish against Nature for the Prince of *Monaco* to have a revenue capable of balancing the power of the King of *France*.

Taxes must thus be proportioned not to the so-called needs of States, but to their available wealth. As soon as one deviates from this rule, no rule at all will be acknowledged; and Empires will soon be led to that terrible epoch, when the nation does not care whether its territory is devastated by the enemy or by the tax collectors.

The proportion of taxes in relation to net profit, which constitutes the sole available wealth (see section 4), must ensure that the fate of the landlords be the best possible, and that their condition be preferable to any other in society. For if any other status were preferable to that of landlord, people would all turn to that other status. They would neglect to use their mobile wealth to create, improve, and maintain landed properties, but would devote them to other operations and enterprises. Then the buildings necessary to farming—barns, stables, presses, etc.—would



fall into ruin; plantations would be abandoned; trees would be chopped down; enclosures would deteriorate; ditches would be filled in; waters would become stagnant on the lands; marshes and fallow land would replace crops; the harvests, net profit, and taxes themselves would perish progressively and inevitably.

This legitimate and natural proportion of taxes with the net profit covering them establishes itself in an emerging society. For it is these landlords, pressed by the necessity of submitting to the tutelary authority they raise among them to guarantee one another in the enjoyment of their possessions, who voluntarily and out of their own interest devote part of the net profit of their domains to cover the expenses due to administration of that protecting authority.

That is how taxes, far from being opposed to the rights of landlords, are on the contrary a usage of their property rights.

It is even a profitable usage of the rights of landlords, for thanks to the security this institution gives to properties and to liberty, landlords can extend and multiply their operations, and infinitely increase agriculture and the products of their lands.

And if we claim that the tutelary authority will perpetually remain co-owner of the net profit of agriculture, according to the proportion fixed by evidence of the quota that taxes must represent to offer the greatest security to society, and to assure the best possible conditions for landlords—and preferable to any other in society—we constitute the most advantageous possible form of taxes for the Sovereign and the Nation.

This way, taxes are naturally proportioned to the real needs of society, since they increase as the population growth, occasioned by the progress of agriculture and the increase in *net profit*, requires an increase in public expenditures devoted to preserve good order and to protect property.

This way, farmers pay the value of the *net profit*, by their free and voluntary engagements, to those who are their owners. It is a great advantage for them that part of that net profit should pass into the hands of the Sovereign authority; for it is the only way to enable that authority to protect their property rights. And they do not have to pay for that; for they have no right of property on the *net profit*, and they are obliged by competition to take full account of whom it belongs to, and they do not mind if part of that *net profit* is called *tax*, while the other is called *farming costs*

[*fermage*], provided they are not burdened with more than the *net profit*, and that their farmers' withholdings are always clear, intact, and assured.

This way, landlords who seem to pay income taxes, pay it in fact on an increase in available wealth or in *net profit* that would not exist without the implementation of taxes; for only the security that taxes provide for property could underwrite and favor the enterprises and operations by which farming was able to produce a net profit, however modest.

This way, taxes, to which a proportioned share of *net profit* belongs, are thus a great advantage for landlords; for they extend the wealth and satisfactions they can enjoy. It is a sort of inalienable common property. It is not part of any of the contracts landlords agree upon together. When they buy and sell lands, they do not buy or sell taxes, they only dispose of the share of the land that is theirs—the taxes being already levied. Thus, those taxes exist no more at the expense of any given landlord than the right other landlords have on the lands bordering his.

This way, taxes are a great advantage for the class of people who subsist only by wages; for they enable them to be certain of the full enjoyment of their rights of personal and mobile property. And they are in no way charged for this; far from withdrawing anything from the wages, or from the facility of earning them, taxes increase gross wages by increasing riches, which results from the entire assurance of property rights.

This way, the freedom of human work is the greatest possible. The competition among those who have the work performed, and among those who perform the work, is the greatest possible; the condition of the landlords is the best possible; the multiplication of riches and of net profit is the quickest possible. As a result, public revenue, which is always proportioned to the constantly increasing *net profit*, is the greatest possible.

This way, the tutelary authority enjoys the entire use of the sums devoted to public revenue; for collection expenses are reduced to nothing, or almost nothing, just as the expenses for the collection of rent [*fermages*] cost nothing to the Nation.

This way, any sort of contestation between the guardians of authority and the subjects is banned for ever; for once the proportion of taxes is established and well-known, arithmetic is sufficient to decide *with sovereign power* what is each person's share in the *net profit* of the territory.

This way, then, the greatest possible public revenue, increasing daily, is the most profitable one possible for all members of society, is onerous to no one, costs nothing to anyone, and is paid for by no one.

This way, finally, the Sovereign authority is in a perfect community of interests with the nation. The income of the latter could not perish, or the Prince, alerted by the decrease in his own revenue, would be spurred by the most pressing motives to put an end to the disorder that destroys the riches of his subjects and his own, and on the contrary to take the most efficacious measures to increase both.

### Section 18

The community of interests between the Sovereign and the nation, manifestly established by the proportionate sharing of the net profit of the territory, is the surest guarantee that the laws of the natural order will be observed.

It is impossible that a Sovereign, convinced by arithmetic that he can increase his riches—and thus his power—only by the prosperity of his subjects, would not be exceedingly careful to be informed about everything that could increase the comfort and happiness of his people, as well as very diligent about preserving his people's free enjoyment of all their property rights.

Wherever a bad constitution makes this community of interests less visible, and where the guardians of public authority could or believed they could make money, at least for a while, independently from the Nation, public instruction about the natural laws—whose *observance* can alone ensure better conditions for princes and Peoples—would soon be neglected. One could even reach a point of finding few or even no Magistrates well informed about those laws. Everything would be abandoned to a torrent of prejudices, to the whims of opinion, to the ruses of a dark and arbitrary politics. One could forget what *property* and *liberty* mean. Riches would diminish because of this fatal lapse of memory. Ruinous expedients could be considered part of the usual regime, momentarily concealing from the Sovereign the degradation they contributed, leading society to weakness and ruin, and Government to poverty and

impotence—all this long before it realized how necessary it was to bring an effective remedy to a disorder so fatal to itself and to the Nation.

### Section 19

This community so necessary between the governing and the governed parts of the State, which puts the greatest interest of the Sovereign in the increase in the net profit of the lands subjected to his rule, and without which no nation may be said to have a constantly prosperous administration, shows us what form Sovereign authority must have, and in whose hands that authority may properly be entrusted. For any form of government that did not include that perfect and visible community of interests between those exercising Sovereign authority and those subjected to it, would evidently be a form forbidden by the laws of the natural order, the most profitable one possible for men gathered in society.

It is evident that a democratic Sovereign cannot exercise his authority by himself, and that he may only make use of it by appointing Commissioners and Representatives to exercise this authority. These representatives, charged with exercising the authority of a democratic Sovereign, are individuals whose functions are necessarily temporary. These *temporary* representatives cannot have a *perpetual* community of interests with the nation. These individuals have or at least may have exclusive private interests opposed to the *observance* of public order and the public interest. Their administration is thus not recommended by the natural order, and cannot strengthen the bonds of society through the union of the interest of the guardians of authority with that of the rest of the Nation.

The same can be said about an aristocratic Sovereign. The members composing it are also individuals who have lands and families, whose exclusive private interests can often be in opposition to the interests of other landlords subjected to their rule, and are thus naturally dearer to aristocrats than the interest of property-owners, which constitutes the public interest.

The same can be said about an elective Monarch. This Prince also has lands and a family that belong to him as an individual, that exist independent of his sovereignty, and that will remain after his sovereignty has

passed. He thus has an exclusive private interest in using the power entrusted to him to improve and extend his domains, to enlarge and enrich his family. If this interest is opposed to that of the public revenue and the private incomes of the Nation, the prince will be exposed to perpetual temptations, which can often become ruinous.

It is not that great virtue and genius in an elective Monarch, in the aristocratic Sovereign, or in the Representatives of a democratic Sovereign—together with sufficient enlightenment in the nation about the rights of property and of liberty—cannot ensure for a while the prosperity of the societies subjected to these different forms of Government. But great genius and virtue are personal qualities that are not always transmitted from one Prince to his successor, and that are rarely extended to a great number of people at the same time. When supreme Administrators lack them in these imperfect Governments, they can be easily seduced by their exclusive private interest. In that case, the enlightenment of the Nation can seem fearsome to them. In that case, the nation necessarily becomes less enlightened than it should be, and than it would be if the current and visible interest of the guardians of authority was to extend and favor public instruction about the natural order. In that case, ignorance contributes to maintain dissension among interests, and to render it more dangerous.

Only with hereditary monarchs can personal and private, current and future interests be intimately, perceptibly, and manifestly linked to the interests of their Nations, by their co-ownership of all *net profits* of the territory subjected to their rule.

It is true that only this co-ownership can effect a perfect community of interests between a Monarch, even hereditary, and his People. For if this Monarch, instead of that joint ownership, had lands to exploit for supplying revenues for the public expenses, he could not perform the duties of a landlord on such a vast extent of land, and to support the revenue from them, he would have only the ruinous resource of favoring his lands to the detriment of those of his subjects. This domanial Monarch would be in a situation vis-à-vis his nation absolutely incompatible with the exercise of Sovereign authority.

But hereditary Monarchy presents the most perfect form of Government when it is combined with the implementation of the joint

ownership of the public in the *net profit* of all landed capital, in such proportion that the treasury revenue is the greatest possible, while the situation of the landlords remains the best possible in society.

## Section 20

A hereditary Monarch, associated with his Nation through the proportional sharing of the *net profit* of landed capital, has a visible interest in the *net profit* being the greatest possible.

He thus has a visible interest in the conditions necessary to the greatest possible net profit being completely fulfilled.

He has a visible interest in competition being as great as possible in all the operations contributing directly or indirectly to the formation of this net profit.

He has a visible interest in the liberty of any kind of trade, domestic or foreign, being complete.

He has a visible interest in the enjoyment of all rights of personal, movable, and landed property being assured.

He has a visible interest in the use of those rights being informed by the most enlightened, most extensive, most universal, and most strongly encouraged public instruction.

He has a visible interest that this general instruction about the *laws of the natural order* should form his Magistrates, whose knowledge and virtue he depends on to examine and decide according to these *laws* how his sovereign authority should be applied in specific cases to maintain property, on whose product his income is based.

He has a visible interest that these studious and skillful Magistrates compare the positive laws he is obliged to promulgate with the divine laws of the natural order, so as to warn him if some error detrimental to his revenue should escape him in his Ordinances. For even the positive laws that seem furthest removed from fiscal laws, cannot but concern the revenue of a co-proprietary Monarch.

They are necessarily either in conformity with or contrary to the natural laws; either favorable or harmful to property and to the liberty inseparable from it.

If they are in conformity with the laws of the natural order, and favorable to property and liberty, they motivate men to put the greatest activity into their work, by leaving the field open to the licit interest of everyone, and by assuring everyone that he will collect the fruits of his labor. They thus extend agriculture, multiply riches, increase the *net profit*, and as a result the revenue of the Sovereign that is proportioned to that *net profit*.

If they are contrary to the laws of order, and harmful to property and liberty, they throw discouragement into the hearts of men, by making them feel powerless and by encumbering their labors with complications. They restrict agriculture, diminish riches and the *net profit*, and thus the Sovereign's revenue.

As a result there is no positive Ordinance, of which one could not ask this question: *is the point to increase our harvests, to raise our children, and to increase the Prince's revenue, or is it to burn our harvests, stifle our offspring, and ruin the public Finances?*

The solution to that question, discussed to a point of manifestness by the Magistrates, will always remind a hereditary and co-proprietary Monarch of his true will. For one cannot envision a Sovereign or even a man who could want to harm others without profit, much less where there is a manifest loss for him and his descendants. This would assume a decision without a reason, an effect without a cause, or rather a decision contrary to reason, an effect contrary to its cause; this would assume a complete absurdity.

## Section 21

Here then is a summary of all the social institutions founded on the natural order, on the physical constitution of men and of the other Beings in their midst.

*Personal Property* established by Nature, and by the physical necessity every individual is under to dispose of all his personal faculties to obtain the things appropriate to fulfill his needs, on pain of suffering or death.

*The freedom to work*, inseparable from personal property of which it constitutes a part.

*Movable property*, which is merely personal property itself, considered

in its usage, its purpose, and its necessary extension to all the things acquired by personal work.

*Freedom of exchange*, of trade, of the use of one's wealth, inseparable from personal and movable property.

*Agriculture*, a use of personal property, movable property, and the liberty that is inseparable from both; a profitable and necessary use, essential for the growth of the population by the multiplication of the products necessary for men's subsistence.

*Landed property*, a necessary consequence of agriculture, which is merely the preservation of one's personal and movable property used for the preparatory work and expenses essential for ensuring the land is cultivable.

*Freedom in the use of the land*, in the type of farming, in all the conventions related to the exploitation, concession, retrocession, exchange, and sale of one's land, inseparable from landed property.

Natural division of the harvest into the *farmers' withholdings*, or riches whose use must serve to perpetuate agriculture, on pain of diminishing population and harvests; and *net profit*, or disposable wealth whose volume determines the prosperity of society, and whose use is left to the will and interests of the landowners, and which constitutes for them the legitimate and natural price of the expenses they incurred and the operations they undertook to ensure that the land would be cultivable.

*Security*, without which property and liberty would be merely rights and not facts, without which the *net profit* would soon be destroyed, without which agriculture itself could not survive.

*Tutelary and sovereign Authority* to procure the security absolutely necessary for property and liberty. It fulfills this important function by promulgating and executing the laws of the natural order, so that property and liberty may be well established.

*Magistrates*, for deciding how the laws of the natural order must be applied in particular cases, as they are reduced to positive laws by the sovereign authority. They also have the imperious duty of comparing the Ordinances of Sovereigns with the laws of essential justice, before venturing to take these positive Ordinances as the standard of their judgments.



*Public Instruction favored* so that the citizens, sovereign authority, and the Magistrates never lose sight of the invariable laws of the natural order, and are never misled by the prestige of opinion, or by the attractions of exclusive private interests that, once they become *exclusive*, are always misunderstood.

*Public revenue*, to constitute the strength and power necessary to Sovereign authority, to cover the expenses of its protective ministry, of the important functions of the Magistrates, and of the public instruction essential to the laws of the natural order.

*Direct Taxes*, or rather the sharing of the net profit of the territory between the landowners and the Sovereign authority, so that public revenue is formed in such a way that it does not restrain property or liberty, and thus is not destructive.

*Essential and necessary proportion of direct tax* to the net profit, so that it provides to society the greatest possible public revenue, and thus the greatest possible degree of security, while still ensuring that the fate of the landowners remains the best available in the society.

*Hereditary Monarchy*, to ensure that all the current and future interests of the depository of sovereign authority be intimately linked with those of society through the proportional sharing of the *net profit*.

SUCH IS THE SUMMARY of that doctrine, which, following the Nature of man, exposes the laws necessary to a Government made for man, and appropriate for man in all climates and countries—a Government that has survived for four thousand years in China under the Tropic of Cancer, and which the genius of a Great Empress<sup>8</sup> is going to establish for the happiness of her subjects in the midst of the Northern ice; a Government that is manifestly most advantageous for Peoples, since it assures them the full and complete enjoyment of all their natural rights, and the greatest possible abundance in the things appropriate for their needs; and manifestly most advantageous to Kings, since it provides them with the greatest possible wealth and authority.

It is only in such a simple and natural Government that Sovereigns are

8. [The reference is to Catherine II (the Great) of Russia (r. 1762–96).]

truly *despots*,<sup>9</sup> that they can do everything they want for their own good, which is inseparably and manifestly linked to that of the nations they govern. To ask for more for them would be to harm and insult them. The privilege of hurting oneself belongs only to madmen, and dementia is not made for the Throne. If we assumed that madness could touch the Throne, it would hardly be harmful for the Sovereign unfortunate enough to suffer from it, or for his subjects, as long as Nations were sufficiently informed about the Laws of order, and as long as Magistrates were watched over by public evidence and thus obliged to be faithful to their duties toward the Prince and toward the People. And yet, the Sovereign who was co-proprietor of the net profit of an enlightened Empire governed by the laws of the natural order would be nonetheless a despot, as far as man can be; for when he wants to increase his revenue and his power, he is sure to find all the wills and all the forces of his subjects disposed to support him, and to hear them say to everyone: *Blessed be the Prince who wants to increase our wealth and our income.*

A government which harmonizes so perfectly the interests of all men, which guarantees so well all their reciprocal rights and duties, which leads them so necessarily to the procurement of the greatest satisfactions of which they are capable, is manifestly the best Government one can imagine—the Government prescribed to men by the natural order.

Could it be believed, however, that, despite the manifestness of the Sovereign truths that we have tried to expose and follow here, and that

9. The word *despot* refers, as is shown by its etymology, to the person *who disposes as he wills*. In applying it, as several famous Moderns have, to arbitrary Sovereigns, one has overlooked that the term implied a contradiction with the idea that one wanted to express; for these arbitrary Sovereigns, whom the vulgar ignorant believe to be *despots*, and who can be ignorant enough to believe it themselves, cannot nevertheless *dispose* of anything, or at least of very little. They are the servants of their servants, the slaves of the fleeting opinions of their people, the feeble playthings of their Soldiers. They can do almost nothing for their own good, or for the good of others. They can improve their servile and dangerous situation only by renouncing their so-called *despotism*. They are thus not true *despots*. To give them that title is to fail in the Metaphysics of language, and manifestly not to use the proper word. This error, although it escaped the attention of magnificent geniuses, is nonetheless an error. That is why we must alter our terminology now that a serious analysis and a scrupulous dissection of ideas make us feel the necessity of expressing ourselves more exactly.

reveal to us the laws of this *physiocratic* Government,<sup>10</sup> there are still men, still writers, and even writers who claim they have studied these truths, who nonetheless persist in asserting that God has not established a natural order that must serve as the standard for society? Or that if he has, it is not true that men can know that order and submit themselves to it? Or at least that if they could, it is not true that each of them should take the initiative in this direction? No, without doubt, this could not be believed, and posterity, which will not see their writings, will be surprised to learn that *I could name up to three of them*. They should be pitied, if they truly doubt that God has given laws to all beings; or if, compelled by experience to avow that we can know with certainty innumerable natural laws of scant importance to us, they nonetheless think that we can acquire no certain knowledge of those that are most crucial for our existence and happiness. They are to be pitied if they are truly unfortunate enough not to sense that man is a reasonable animal capable of being guided by his manifest interest. But if they spared no maneuvers to delay the progress of research on such important matters; if they diffused the most bitter hostility in their writings; if they burdened with odious accusations peaceful men who work with zeal for the sole purpose of contributing to the happiness of the human species; if they tried, though in vain, to cast suspicion—in the eyes of the administration—on virtuous citizens whose every wish and every study aims only at the glory of the Prince and the prosperity of the State, they should be pitied still more. The activity, the numerous efforts caused by a misunderstood pride, and by base private interests in opposition to manifestly useful truths, serve only to bury deeper and deeper those who abandon themselves to the mire of contempt and of public indignation.

10. [I.e., government by the laws of *physis*, or nature.]



## *Dialogues on the Grain Trade*

1769

FOR A SUMMARY of Galiani's life, see the excerpt from *On Money* (chapter 21). The publication in 1770 of *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds* (*Dialogues on the Grain Trade*) caused a firestorm; free-market friends cried betrayal, and one of them, *abbé* Morellet, attacked him in a lengthy 1770 pamphlet (censored until a change of government made possible its publication in 1774). Galiani pursued this polemic in a brief parody, *La bagarre*, which has been rediscovered only in the twentieth century.

In 1764, the French government passed an edict designed to assure the free export of grain. In the midst of an economic crisis in 1768, and a general controversy over the wisdom of the 1764 edict, Galiani's *Dialogues* was the most influential critique. The dialogue involves three characters. The Marquis is a socially well-connected conformist proud of having read all the latest and most fashionable writings—mostly by the Physiocrats—on economic policy. The Knight (Chevalier) was a well-traveled gentleman who had been away from Paris since 1764 and who prided himself on having read none of the Physiocrats' writings, and on resting his economic judgments upon his travels and observations alone. He certainly represents the views of the author. The President, who enters the conversation midway through the work, serves as a foil who facilitates the conversation.

The present excerpt from the seventh of the eight dialogues was chosen because it provides both a convenient summary of the core discussion up to that point and a sample of the distinctive narrative and rhetoric.

ical style of the author. The translation is based on the 1770 London edition of *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds*, pp. 200–212. All notes are by the present editor.

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## Dialogues on the Grain Trade

*The Marquis*

And what were we supposed to do to encourage agriculture and make it flourish?

*The Knight*

Oh, you want to know too many things at the same time. Let us continue . . .

*The Marquis*

You want to continue, and I am stopping you. I still feel sore about this bet you unfairly won, and I am asking for revenge. I want to bet.

*The Knight*

On what?

*The Marquis*

Listen carefully. This time I am definitely betting that you are against the [free] export [of grain]; that you agree with me on the fact that we must withdraw the Edict [of 1764],<sup>1</sup> and go back to our former situation—as I told you when you trapped me with a comparison that was pleasing but had nothing to do with what we were saying.

1. [The Royal Edict of July 19, 1764, went far toward explicitly guaranteeing the free export of grain, though the Physiocrats sometimes claimed that it did not go far enough; see “Lettre de M. Le Trosne, Avocat du Roi à Orléans, sur la nécessité de l’entière liberté du commerce des grains,” in *Ephémérides du citoyen*, vol. 4 (Nov. 1767).]

*The Knight*

Will you bet a lot?

*The Marquis*

Everything you'd like! One scruple stops me, though, and it is that I am betting for real; I can read it in your eyes.

*The Knight*

And will the President bet as well?

*The President*

I would be tempted.

*The Knight*

On what grounds?

*The President*

Here they are: You have proven to us that we must not let France export grain other than the real surplus of an ordinary year. You have then proven to us that it was very doubtful that this surplus existed, and that nobody knew about it or could have known about it until now. And you ended up concluding that it would be better that way, because the purpose of any good government must be the increase in a population that would consume all the harvest, and not the increase in the latter's departure to foreign countries. After setting up that purpose, you left us uncertain about the choice of means. But you had us consider [several facts].

First, the weight and volume of grain, in increasing transportation costs, decreases the profit in trade. Second, the difficulty of preservation in transit increases the losses and risks even more. Third, the same problem remains if it is kept in storage, which obliges the trader either to suffer waste, or to sell hastily, and thus miss opportunities to sell at a high price. Fourth, one always encounters the most adverse season when the grain must necessarily be sold without being able to wait for the good season. Fifth, it [the grain trade] is neither the treasure nor the wealth of

any country in particular; as it comes from everywhere, and may run out everywhere, this trade—always vague, uncertain, fortuitous, and short-lived—is not fixed in regular channels or subject to a steady and continuous turnover; so that this trade—which is not as quiet as others—looks more like looting than like an honest trade. Sixth, since it is abandoned by most merchants, whether from lack of means or of courage, it is automatically reduced to a monopoly, if one wants to trade wholesale with foreign countries. On the contrary, the domestic retail trade in grain is teeming with cleverness, fraud, and petty cheating. Its technical details, swallowing honest gains, force one into illicit conduct. Seventh, grain purchases under current conditions are impracticable, and in general, it is almost impossible to effect them without arousing complaints and disturbing whole provinces. There are no human means to balance, on the one hand, the secret of extraordinary commissions that must be maintained with salesmen, and on the other, the necessity not to let ordinary supplies run out or become expensive on a market that has just been caught off guard, as it were. Eighth, if purchasing is tedious, the internal turnover is even longer, more inconvenient, tangled in detail, and exceedingly prone to loss and waste. So many intermediaries harm the true usefulness of trade, which should only aim at enriching and encouraging the productive class. The number of hazards—as it increases proportionally to the number of different hands that handle this trade—raises the price by at least a third above ordinary cost. Finally, because the innumerable methods that are required to transform grain into bread prevent the farmer from selling it directly to the consumer, they leave him with only a very meager benefit from high prices. Therefore, in conclusion, it must be said that, if bread is the object ranked first among the needs of men, it is ranked last as far as commercial profit is concerned. If it is the dearest to the administration, it is the most unrewarding, the most often treacherous and costly for the trader; it is the most indispensable, but also the least reliable way for each state to become rich when it sells to its neighbors. The current condition of all purely agricultural nations, which you have described for us, is striking proof. According to the very coherent chain of reflections you have just presented to us—and I must confess that most of them were new to me—what other

conclusion would you draw, except that we must completely abandon the system of export adopted by the economists?<sup>2</sup>

*The Knight*

But will you bet?

*The President*

I am not bold enough for that.

*The Knight*

And you are right, because you would have lost. Marquis, it pains me to say so, but to tell you the truth—and this will be my final word—I am in favor of free export.

*The Marquis*

You mean against, don't you?

*The Knight*

I am in favor, not against.

*The Marquis*

You are pulling our leg as usual. This can't be possible.

*The Knight*

It is just as I tell you, though.

*The Marquis*

But on what grounds?

*The Knight*

Before sharing them with you, I want to tell you a little story.

2. ["Economists" was at that time a synonym for the Physiocrats, such as Quesnay and Mirabeau. For an introduction to their doctrine, see the essay by Du Pont de Nemours, chapter 33 of this volume.]



*The Marquis*

You have good ones sometimes. Let's hear this one.

*The Knight*

A few years ago in Rome, there was a young Abbot, whom I knew well. His family was fairly rich, and his mother deeply wanted him to become a Prelate. So he was bought a prelacy, and as soon as he had taken holy orders, he was given a position as a magistrate in one of the courts of Rome, called the *Buon governo*. It is roughly like the Châtelet in Paris.<sup>3</sup> On the day he was to start his term of office, luck would have it that a case that had become famous because of quite extraordinary circumstances was about to come before the court. (It dealt with the validity of a will.) It was the talk of the town; people looked forward to the judgment of that Court. It was composed of only twelve Prelates. In serious cases, each Judge writes his opinion and reads it aloud; and it is customary in Rome to let the verdict of each Judge leak out; no one makes a mystery out of it as in other countries. Now you must know that our man was an idiot.

*The Marquis*

Who? The young Prelate?

*The Knight*

Yes, the young Prelate was still a fool, even though he was already a Prelate, and as a result, he did not want to look like it. He felt strongly that he had to shine in his *début*, that everybody would talk about his "voto," and that he had to make his reputation for insight and knowledge on this fortunate occasion. Therefore, without thinking twice (for he did not beat about the bush), he had a famous Lawyer, whom he strongly urged to give him something good, whatever the price might be, write a verdict for him. He wanted it to be well filled with quotations and extracts from Latin authors—and the best ones. The Lawyer, an honest man, did his best. Justinian, Gratian, the Gloss, Accursius, and

3. [I.e., a court of common civil and criminal pleas, of first instance.]

Cujas—every one of them was resorted to,<sup>4</sup> and it must be acknowledged that the opinion he received in writing was magnificent. It proved as clear as daylight that the will had to be quashed. On the very morning of that fateful judgment day, the Lawyer brought this writing to his Lordship, who received it with transports of enthusiasm, gratitude, and reward; he then perused the verdict two or three times to be able to read it smoothly, declaimed it a little in his bedroom, folded it, pocketed it, had his horses harnessed, and set off for the Palace, head held high. He felt in possession of something that would allow him to aspire to immortality. But one is never aware of everything, and one cannot avoid one's destiny. Unfortunately for him that day, he was not the first person to pronounce himself. Two Prelates were to speak before him, and both pronounced themselves in favor of the validity of the will. What a disaster! Faced with this unexpected blow, our man was in despair. The idea hit him that all the other Judges would pronounce themselves for the will, and that he would remain alone with his verdict. What shame! What ridicule! The whole town would say he was alone! This prospect made him blush, blanch, and tremble. He swore and cursed inwardly: "Damn, that treacherous Lawyer! He deceived me, tricked me, even though I paid him well. The rogue! He makes me stand out from the rest." He then realized what a drawback it was to have only one verdict. He said to himself: "Ah, how foolish of me! How much would it have cost me to order the two opposing verdicts so as to use them as occasion warranted? Just a little more money, what would it have mattered? When one's honor is at stake, one must know how to spend without stinting." But all his useless regrets fell on his afflicted heart, and he had no time left for anything; he had to accept it, the fateful hour of his reading was drawing closer. And yet what to do? What side to take? What is to become of him? He could very well say in a nutshell that he agreed with the Prelates who had preceded him; but the verdict, that lovely, costly verdict—what would become of it? Everyone would say that he had not

4. [The Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65) codified Roman Law in the *Corpus Juris Civilis*; Gratian was an Italian legal scholar whose *Decretum* (c. 1140) synthesized Church law; Francesco Accursius (1182–1260) was a Bolognese legal scholar who compiled a glossary of the whole body of law; Jacques Cujas (1522–90) was a French jurist and close student of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*.]

studied the case, that he had no verdict, and everyone would have it wrong, since he had it in his pocket. Finally despair gave him courage, and he bravely made up his mind; he took his paper out, read it loudly and clearly, with grace and dignity, without changing anything in it. The only thing was that, when he came to the solemn words of the conclusion, instead of saying, "I am for quashing the will," he said, "I am for the validity of the will." The Cardinal, who presided over the Court and suspected nothing, believed it was a misunderstanding, and said immediately: "Surely, my Lord, you are mistaken, you mean you are for quashing it." Our Prelate modestly replied: "I beg your pardon, your Honor, I am for the will." The Cardinal answered: "But how is that? You have just proven the contrary." Our man kept repeating: "It does not matter, your Honor, I am for the will. I agree with these gentlemen who were for it too." They all looked at one another, puzzled, scarcely daring to believe their ears. Everyone asked him questions in turn: Why? How? By what reasoning? He continued to answer to everyone that he was for the will. Finally, he let out a few barely articulate words, saying that he did not want to be the talk of the town for his lonesome opinion. His neighbor heard the words, understood the enigma, and discovered that in his own mind, he was unbelievably convinced that one had to have the same opinions as everyone else, just as one had to have the same clothes.

#### *The Marquis*

Ah, my good Sir, now I've got you. You knew you were greatly suspected of making up your stories on the spur of the moment; for this occasion I am convinced of it. Your story was too convenient. To tell you the truth, as soon as you uttered the words, "I am for [free] export," I said to myself: "What is that? Surely the Knight sees that he would be the only man of wit [*homme d'esprit*], the only man of good company who would be against free export, he is completely ashamed of being on his own, and he has decided to follow the crowd for fear of being anathematized."

#### *The Knight*

So you do not believe that I have more wit than that Prelate? Well, I assure you that the story is true, and that I told it to you on purpose, so as to forestall your suspicions. I will never be afraid to hold my opinions

alone—even against the whole of nature. If, after distrusting my reasoning for a long time, I was firmly certain about my opinion, I would not fear to say it either, even at the risk of being deafened by the shouts that would rise against me. But the reason why I favor freedom of export is surely due neither to the smile of favor upon my conformity, nor to the pleasure of being ranked among the witty [*gens d'esprit*], admitted into good company by the sole title of exportationist. I have other reasons for committing myself to it.

*The President, to the Knight*

If the marquis wished to amuse himself and joke around for a little while, do not doubt that he saw as well as I that, even if you gave us innumerable reflections on the nature of grain which no one had deigned to ponder or penetrate, it is possible that you are in favor of [free] export for other reasons which have been either neglected or barely mentioned by the very people who defended it. Therefore, I would not be surprised if you combatted exportation with the same reasons that were used to recommend it, and then defended it with the opposite arguments. It would be quite a remarkable phenomenon, but I expect it.

*The Marquis, to the President*

The President is so kind as to ascribe to me intentions I do not have. I say and I persist in maintaining that the Knight claimed he was in favor of exportation solely to be like everybody else, or to exasperate us. Let him speak, and you will see whether I am right. Let us see why you have decided in favor of exportation.

*The Knight*

First, if the quantity of grain France produces is uncertain, there might be a real surplus that must be either exported or left to rot. Second, if the true purpose of government is population, and if that population is below what is possible in France, this gap will not be bridged for several generations. While waiting for this fortunate epoch, one must take the most sensible course of action for the moment. Legislation must always concern itself with the current situation, and never the future, because

there is always time to modify the law when change occurs. Third, if the true wealth of a State must be expected from the progress of Manufactures,<sup>5</sup> there is a way to reconcile moderate, regulated exports with a low-paid labor force. Fourth, if grain is resistant to trade, as it were, because of its weight, delicacy, perishability, and difficulty of circulation in winter, it is, however, certain that a grain trade exists, and that it is the principal preoccupation of almost every poor and agrarian country. As far as France is concerned, it could be a source of profit which should not be neglected, even though one should not expect from it all the good it has been praised for. Fifth, if wholesale trade with foreign countries becomes a monopoly on its own, if retail trade evades the speculation of honest traders, if purchases are difficult and pressing, if the turnover is long, tedious, and full of hazards and waste, it is also true that art corrects Nature in almost everything, and that with time and care, it sometimes manages to completely conquer and tame her. Sixth, if the profits of trade and the value of grain remain almost entirely absorbed by hands that are less dear to the government than those of the Farmer, it is still more fitting that these profits should go into the hands of intermediaries rather than to nobody if the grain were left to rot in lofts. Seventh, finally, property and liberty are sacred rights of men; they are the first among our rights, they are part of us, they constitute our political essence as the body and soul constitute our physical one. Except for the links attaching us to society, nothing must disrupt them. Interests and harm done to third parties belong to the field of justice. The common interest and general harm belong to the field of politics. But when both powerful and demanding Goddesses were pacified, and when nothing hurt their feelings any more, when nothing concerned them, men then received their rights, they became free property owners again, and I know no other legitimate power on earth that could deprive them of these. Neither a Despot's whims on the one hand, nor a Metaphysician's speculations on the other, neither the demented screams of the crowd, nor the unfounded fears of a government that is unjust through weakness and arbitrary through timidity, have any legitimate right or valid excuse to meddle in our affairs.

5. [This had been the argument earlier in the work; see Dialogue Five, pp. 110–19.]

*The Marquis*

You see how right I was; the Knight agrees with everyone. I mean every true wit [*bel esprit*]. He says the same thing as all those wits, he speaks like them, and he has eventually come to use those high-flown words—property and liberty! This is the fundamental basis; this is what we must come to in the end!

*The President*

I beg your pardon, Marquis, but the Knight is far from agreeing with the Authors you have read. Do you see the exceptions he added to the rights to property and liberty?—The interest of a third party and the common interest. These exceptions are not as small as they seem to you. They can lead him very far. As for his reasons for adopting [free] export, I find him to be in no more agreement with anyone. He announces that exports will not produce those wonderful effects that were expected of them, but lesser ones. He claims that the profit will end up in other hands than those of the farmer. And finally, he wants art to correct everything that Nature opposes to the grain trade, and all the evil that manufactures would receive from an unlimited, ill-considered freedom of exportation. Nothing like that has been said, as far as I know. It was always firmly believed that all you needed was to pass an Edict for commerce, exports, and exchanges to run smoothly on their own, without complications or bad effects. It was even believed that no art, no rule, no precaution was necessary, and it was constantly maintained that agriculture was to be the foundation of national wealth, and that exportation was to be the basis of agriculture.

*The Marquis*

I was wrong, I concede. But by the way, my good Knight, how did the trial turn out for our Prelate?

*The Knight*

His misfortune was complete. All those who gave their verdicts after him agreed with his verdict, and disagreed with him. The will was quashed.

*The Marquis*

Ah, I am so glad for the sake of the Lawyer's honor. Now if I wanted to be mean, I would use your story to utter a prophecy concerning you, but I will not do it. I want to be kind and to keep still. I want to believe that you are genuinely convinced of the usefulness of free exportation as such. You will agree, however, that you cannot be greatly enthusiastic about this exportation, since you do not prefer the trade in foodstuffs over that of manufactures, and even in the grain trade, you maintained that the bulk of the profits will not end up in the farmer's hands.



“A Philosophical and Political  
History of the Settlements and  
Trade of the Europeans in the  
East and West Indies”

1770

GUILLAUME-THOMAS-FRANÇOIS, *abbé* Raynal, was born in 1713. After studying with and entering the Jesuit order, he became disaffected and left the order for Paris in 1747, becoming affiliated with St.-Sulpice parish. He was soon made editor of *Mercure de France*. His 1748 works on the Dutch Stadholderate and the English Parliament did much to make his reputation, and he was invited into the circles of government ministers and enlightened salon-goers, becoming a regular at the salons of Mme. Geoffrin, Helvétius, and Baron d'Holbach.

After writing numerous short works on history and European affairs, he finally brought out in 1770 his anonymous multivolume masterpiece *Histoire philosophique et politique, des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes*. The work, said to have involved the collaboration of several other writers, including Diderot, caused a sensation and went through some thirty editions by 1789. It was put on the Index in 1774 and publicly burned. The book was found objectionable because of its treatment of religion and its advocacy of the popular right to consent to taxation and to revolt, among other things. Its sometimes incendiary



treatment of the slave trade (Justamond ed., vol. 3, pp. 439–66) became canonical in the debate over abolition that it did much to spur. When an even more outspoken edition came out in 1781, the Parlement of Paris put out an *arrêt* against book and author, and Raynal was forced into exile. He traveled to Belgium, London, Germany, Prussia, and Switzerland, where he was mostly celebrated. Allowed to return to France but not to Paris in 1787, he was elected to the Third Estate for Marseilles in 1789, though he refused to serve because of his advanced age. In May of 1791, he made a famous written address to the National Assembly that was critical of revolutionary trends. Many angry pamphlets and caricatures followed, and he lost much of his property in 1793. He died in 1796.

The excerpt reprinted here, based on the second French edition of the *Histoire philosophique et politique*, is the author's general essay on commerce contained in book 19 of the English-language edition: *A Philosophical and political history of the settlements and trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, translated by J. Justamond, 3rd ed. (London: Cadell, 1777), 5 vols., 5:492–511. Notes are by the present editor.

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## A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies

If the art of navigation arose from fishing, as that of war did from the chase; the navy then owes its existence to commerce. The desire of gain first induced us to make voyages; and one world hath been conquered to enrich another. This object of conquest has been the foundation of commerce; in order to support commerce, naval forces have become necessary, which are themselves produced by the trading navigation. The Phenicians, situated on the borders of the sea at the confines of Asia and Africa, to receive and dispense all the riches of the ancient world,

founded their colonies and built their cities, with no other view but that of commerce. At Tyre, they were the masters of the Mediterranean; at Carthage, they laid the foundations of a republic that traded by the ocean upon the richest of the European coasts.

The Greeks succeeded the Phenicians; as the Romans did the Carthaginians and the Greeks; they held the dominion of the sea as well as of the land; but they carried on no other kind of commerce, except that of conveying into Italy, for their own use, all the riches of Africa, Asia, and the conquered world. When Rome had invaded the whole world, and had lost all her acquisitions, commerce returned, as it were, to its original source towards the east. There it was established, while the Barbarians over-ran Europe. The empire was divided; the din of arms, and the art of war remained in the west; Italy however preserved its communication with the Levant, where all the treasures of India were circulated.

The Crusades exhausted in Asia all the rage of zeal and ambition, of war and fanaticism, with which the Europeans were possessed: but they were the cause of introducing into Europe a taste for Asiatic luxury; and redeemed by giving rise to some degree of traffic and industry, the blood and the lives they had cost. Three centuries taken up in wars and voyages to the east, gave to the restless spirit of Europe a recruit it stood in need of; that it might not perish by a kind of internal consumption: they prepared the way for that exertion of genius and activity, which since arose, and displayed itself in the conquest and trade of the West-Indies, and of America.

The Portuguese attempted by degrees to double the African coast. They successively seized upon all the points, and all the ports that must necessarily lead them to the Cape of Good Hope. They were engaged, for the space of fourscore years, in making themselves masters of all that western coast, where this great cape terminates. In 1497, Vasco de Gama surmounted this barrier; and returning by the eastern coast of Africa, arriving by a passage of twelve hundred leagues at the coast of Malabar, where all the treasures of the richest countries of Asia were to be circulated. This was the scene on which the Portuguese displayed all their conquests.

While this nation made itself master of the articles of trade, the Spaniards seized upon that which purchases them, the mines of gold and

silver. These metals became not only a standard to regulate the value, but also the object of commerce. In this double use they soon engrossed all the rest. All nations were in want of them to facilitate the exchange of their commodities, and obtain the conveniencies they stood in need of. The luxury and the circulation of money in the south of Europe, changed the nature as well as the direction of commerce, at the same time that it extended its bounds.

But the two nations that had subdued the East and West Indies, neglected arts and agriculture. They imagined every thing was to be obtained by gold, without considering that it is labour alone that procures it: they were convinced, though late, and at their own expence, that the industry which they lost, was more valuable than the riches they acquired; and the Dutch taught them this severe instruction.

The Spaniards though possessed of all the gold in the world remained or became poor; the Dutch presently acquired riches, without either lands or mines. Holland is a nation at the service of all the rest, but who sells her services at a high price. As soon as she had taken refuge in the midst of the sea, with industry and freedom, which are her tutelary gods, she perceived that she had not a sufficient quantity of land to support the sixth part of her inhabitants. She then chose the whole world for her domain, and resolved to enjoy it by her navigation and commerce. She made all lands contribute to her subsistence; and all nations supply her with the conveniencies of life. Between the north and the south of Europe, she became what Flanders had been before, from which she had divided, in order to form an independent state entirely unconnected with it. Bruges and Antwerp had attracted Italy and Germany into their ports; Holland in her turn became the staple of all commercial powers, rich or poor. Not satisfied with inviting all other nations, she visited them herself, in order to procure from one what was wanted by another; to convey to the north, the merchandise of the south; to sell to the Spaniard ships for cargoes, and to exchange upon the Baltic wine for wood. She imitated the stewards and farmers of large estates, who by the immense profits they make in them, are enabled sooner or later to buy them up. Spain and Portugal have as it were been the cause that Holland has succeeded in taking from those powers part of their conquests in the East and West Indies, and almost the whole of the profit of their

colonies. She availed herself of the indolence of these proud conquerors; and by her activity and vigilance, obtained the key of their treasures, leaving them nothing but the chest, which she took care to empty as fast as they replenished it. It is thus that a people of little refinement ruined two nations of polite and noble manners; but at the most honest and the most lawful game that can be met with in the several combinations of chance.

Every circumstance was favourable to the rise and progress of the commerce of this republic. Its position on the borders of the sea, at the mouths of several great rivers; its proximity to the most fertile or best cultivated lands of Europe; its natural connections with England and Germany, which defended it against France; the little extent and fertility of its own territory which obliged the inhabitants to become fishermen, sailors, brokers, bankers, carriers, and commissaries; in a word, to endeavour to live by industry for want of territory. Moral causes contributed with those of the climate and the soil, to establish and advance its prosperity. The liberty of its government, which opened an asylum to all strangers dissatisfied with their own; the freedom of its religion, which permitted a public and quiet profession of all other modes of worship; that is to say, the agreement of the voice of nature with that of conscience, of interests with duty; in a word, that toleration, that universal religion of all equitable and enlightened minds, friends to heaven and earth; to God, as to their father; to men, as to their brethren. In short, this commercial republic found out the secret of availing itself of all events, and of making even the calamities and vices of other nations concur in advancing its felicity. It turned to its own advantage the civil wars which fanaticism raised among people of a restless spirit, or which patriotism excited among a free people; it profited by the indolence and ignorance which bigotry supported among two nations who were under the influence of the imagination.

This spirit of industry in Holland, with which was intermixed a considerable share of that political art which sows the seeds of jealousy and discord among the nations, at length excited the attention of other powers. The English were the first to perceive that traffic might be carried on without the interposition of the Dutch. England, where the attempts of despotism had given birth to liberty, because they were antecedent to corruption and effeminacy, was desirous of obtaining riches by labour

which alleviate the burden of it. The English first considered commerce as the proper science and support of an enlightened, powerful and even a virtuous people. They considered it rather as an improvement of industry than an acquisition of enjoyments; rather as an encouragement and a source of activity among the people, than a promoter of luxury and magnificence. Invited to trade by their situation, this became the spirit of their government, and the means of their ambition. All their schemes tended to this great object. In other monarchies, trade is carried on by the common people; in this happy constitution by the state or the whole nation: she carries it on indeed with a constant desire of dominion, which implies that of enslaving other people, but by means, at least, that constitute the happiness of the world before it is subdued. By war, the conqueror is little happier than the conquered; because injuries and massacres are their mutual object: but by commerce, the conquering people necessarily introduce industry into the country, which they would not have subdued if it had been already industrious, or which they would not maintain, if they had not brought industry in along with them. Upon these principles England had founded her commerce and her empire, and mutually and alternately extended one by the other.

The French, situated under as favourable a sky, and upon as happy a soil, have for a long time flattered themselves with the idea that they had much to give to other nations, without being under a necessity of asking scarce any return. But Colbert<sup>1</sup> was sensible that in the fermentation Europe was in at this time, there would be an evident advantage for the culture and productions of a country that should employ those of the whole world. He opened manufactures for all the arts. The woollens, silks, dyes, embroideries, the gold and silver stuffs, were brought to so great a degree of refinement in luxury and taste in the hands of the French, that they were in great request among those nobles who were in possession of the greatest landed property. To increase the produce of the arts, it was necessary to procure the first materials, and these could only be supplied by direct commerce. The chances of navigation had given France some possessions in the new world, as they had to all the plunderers that had frequented the sea. The ambition of some individuals had formed

1. [Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Controller-general of France, 1661–83.]

colonies there, which had been at first supported and even aggrandized by the trade of the Dutch and the English. A national navy must necessarily restore to the mother country this natural connection with its colonists. The government, therefore, established its naval forces upon the strength of its commercial navigation. The nation would then necessarily make a double profit upon the materials and the workmanship of the manufactures. The French pursued for a long time this precarious and temporary object of commerce, with an activity and spirit of emulation which must have made them greatly surpass their rivals; and they still enjoy that superiority over other nations, in all those arts of luxury and ornament which procure riches to industry.

The natural volatility of the national character and its propensity to trifling pursuits, hath brought treasures to the state, by the taste that has fortunately prevailed for its fashions. Like to that light and delicate sex, which teaches and inspires us with a taste for dress, the French reign in all courts, at least, by the toilet; and their art of pleasing is one of the mysterious sources of their fortune and power. Other nations have subdued the world by those simple and rustic manners, which constitute the virtues that are fit for war; to them it was given to reign over it by their vices. Their empire will continue, till they are degraded and enslaved by their masters by exertions of authority equally arbitrary and unlimited, when they will become contemptible in their own eyes. Then, they will lose, with their confidence in themselves, that industry, which is one of the sources of their opulence and of the springs of their activity. They will soon have neither manufactures, colonies nor trade.

This taste for luxury and ease hath given rise to a new principle of the moral world, which hath insinuated itself by degrees, till it is become, as it were, necessary to the existence of political bodies: it hath produced the love of labour, which at present constitutes the chief strength of a state. The sedentary occupations of the mechanic arts indeed, render men more liable to be affected by the injuries of the seasons, less fit to be exposed to the open air which is the first nutritive principle of life. But still, it is better that the human race should be enervated under the roofs of the workshops, than inured to hardships under tents; because war destroys, while commerce on the contrary gives new life to every thing. By this useful revolution in manners, the general maxims of politics have al-

tered the face of Europe. It is no longer a people immersed in poverty that becomes formidable to a rich nation. Power is at present an attendant on riches, because they are no longer the fruit of conquest, but the produce of constant labour, and of a life spent in perpetual employment. Gold and silver corrupt only those indolent minds which indulge in the delights of luxury, upon that stage of intrigue and meanness, that is called greatness. But these metals employ the hands and arms of the people; they excite a spirit of agriculture in the fields; of navigation in the maritime cities; and in the center of the state they lead to the manufacturing of arms, cloathing, furniture, and the construction of buildings. A spirit of emulation exists between man and nature; they are perpetually improving each other. The people are formed and fashioned by the arts they profess. If there are some occupations which soften and degrade the human race, there are others by which it is hardened and repaired. If it be true that art renders them unnatural, they do not, at least, propagate in order to destroy themselves, as among the barbarous nations in heroic times. It is certainly an easy, as well as a captivating subject, to describe the Romans with the single art of war, subduing all the other arts, all other nations indolent or commercial, civilized or savage; breaking or despising the vases of Corinth, more happy with their gods made of clay, than with the golden statues of their worthless emperors. But it is a more pleasing, and perhaps, a nobler sight, to behold all Europe peopled with laborious nations, who are continually sailing round the globe, in order to cultivate and render it fit for mankind; to see them animate by the enlivening breath of industry, all the regenerating powers of nature; seek in the abyss of the ocean, and in the bowels of rocks, for new means of subsistence, or new enjoyments; stir and raise up the earth with all the mechanic powers invented by genius; establish between the two hemispheres by the happy improvements in the art of navigation, a communication of flying bridges, as it were, that re-unite one continent to the other; pursue all the tracks of the sun, overcome its annual barriers, and pass from the tropics to the poles upon the wings of the wind; in a word to see them open all the streams of population and pleasure, in order to pour them upon the face of the earth through a thousand channels. It is then, perhaps, that the divinity contemplates his work with satisfaction, and does not repent himself of having made man.

Such is the image of commerce; let us now admire the genius of the merchant. The same understanding that Newton had to calculate the motion of the stars, he exerts in tracing the progress of the commercial people that fertilize the earth. His problems are the more difficult to resolve, as the circumstances of them are not taken from the immutable laws of nature, as the systems of the geometrician are; but depend upon the caprices of men, and the uncertainty of a thousand events. That accurate spirit of combination that Cromwell and Richelieu<sup>2</sup> must have had, the one to destroy, the other, to establish despotic government, the merchant also possesses and carries it further: for he takes in both worlds at one view, and directs his operations upon an infinite variety of relative considerations, which it is seldom given to the statesman, or even to the philosopher, to comprehend and estimate. Nothing must escape him; he must foresee the influence of the seasons, upon the plenty, the scarcity, and the quality of provisions; upon the departure or return of his ships; the influence of political affairs upon those of commerce; the changes which war or peace must necessarily occasion in the prices and demands for merchandise, in the quantity and choice of provisions, in the state of the cities and ports of the whole world; he must know the consequences that an alliance of the two northern nations may have under the torrid zone; the progress, either towards aggrandizement or decay, of the several trading companies; the effect that the fall of any European power in India, may have over Africa and America; the stagnation that may be produced in certain countries, by the blocking up of some channels of industry; the reciprocal connection there is between most branches of trade, and the mutual assistances they lend by the temporary injuries they seem to inflict upon each other; he must know the proper time to begin, and when to stop in every new undertaking: in a word, he must be acquainted with the art of making all other nations tributary to his own, and of increasing his own fortune by increasing the prosperity of his country; or rather he must know how to enrich himself by extending the

2. [Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Lord Protector of the Commonwealth after the execution of Charles I in 1649. Armand Jean Du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), was chief minister (1624–42) in the government of Louis XIII.]



general prosperity of mankind. Such are the objects that the profession of the merchant engages him to attend to.

It is also the trader's peculiar business to search into the recesses of the human heart, and to treat with his equals apparently, as if they were honest, but, in reality, as if they were men of no probity. Commerce is a science that equally requires the knowledge of men and of things. Its difficulty arises undoubtedly less from the variety of objects about which it is conversant, than from the avidity of those who are engaged in it. If emulation increases the concurrence of efforts, jealousy prevents their success. If interest is the vice that destroys professions in general, what must be its effects upon that in particular to which it owes its existence? The avidity with which it is carried on is the cause of its destruction. The thirst of gain spreads over commerce a spirit of avarice that lays a restraint upon every thing, even the means of amassing.

Is that competition between different governments which induces them to restrain general industry by mutual prohibitions, to be ascribed to the merchant; or to that tyrannical exertion of authority, which in order to acquire riches without the assistance of commerce, lays a restraint on all branches of industry by subjecting them to corporations? Certainly on the latter; for all these societies<sup>3</sup> destroy the very spirit of commerce, which is liberty. To compel the indigent man to pay for the privilege of working, is to condemn him at once to idleness by the indigence he is reduced to, and to become indigent through idleness; it is to diminish the sum total of national labour; to impoverish the people by enriching the state; and to destroy them both.

The jealousy of trade between states is only a secret conspiracy to ruin each other, without any particular benefit to any one. Those who govern the people, exert the same skill in guarding against the industry of the nations, as in preserving themselves from the intrigues of the great. One individual alone, who is mean and destitute of every principle, is able to introduce a hundred restraints into Europe. New chains are contrived with as much expedition as destructive weapons. Prohibitions in

3. ["Corporations" and "societies" refer to the system of privileged guilds and merchant companies then prevalent in many parts of Europe.]

commerce, and extortions in the finance, have given rise to smugglers and galley slaves, to customs and monopolies, to pirates and excisemen. Centinels<sup>4</sup> and obstacles are placed in every part of the sea and of the land. The traveller enjoys no repose, the merchant no property; both are equally exposed to all the artifices of an insidious legislation, that gives rise to crimes by its prohibitions, and to penalties by crimes. They become culpable without knowing it, or without design: they are arrested, plundered and taxed, though innocent. The rights of the people are violated by their protectors; and those of the citizen by himself: the courtier is constantly endeavouring to disquiet the statesman; and the contractor oppresses the merchant. Such is the state of commerce in time of peace. But what shall we say of commercial wars?

It is natural enough, for a people pent up in the icy regions of the north, to dig out iron from the bowels of the earth that refuses them subsistence; and to reap the harvest of another nation by force of arms: hunger, which is restrained by no laws, cannot violate any, and seems to plead an excuse for these hostilities. Men must necessarily live by plunder, when they have no corn. But, when a nation enjoys the privilege of an extensive commerce, and can supply several other states from its superfluity; what motive can induce it to declare war against other industrious nations; to obstruct their navigation and their labours; in a word, to forbid them to live on pain of death? Why does it arrogate to itself an exclusive branch of trade, a right of fishing and sailing, as if it were a matter of property, and as if the sea were to be divided into acres as well as the land? The motives of such wars are easily discovered: we know that the jealousy of commerce is nothing more than a jealousy of power. But have any people a right to obstruct a work they cannot execute themselves, and to condemn another nation to indolence, because they themselves chuse to be entirely given up to it?

How unnatural and contradictory an expression is a war of commerce! Commerce is the source and means of subsistence; war of destruction. Commerce may, possibly, give rise to war, and continue it; but war puts a stop to every branch of commerce. Whatever advantage one nation may derive from another in trade, becomes a motive of industry and em-

4. [Sentinels.]

ulation to both: in war, on the contrary, the injury affects both; for plunder, fire and sword can neither improve lands, nor enrich mankind. The wars of commerce are so much the more fatal, as by the present superiority of the maritime powers over those of the continent, and of Europe over the three other parts of the world, the conflagration becomes general; and that the dissensions of two maritime powers excite the spirit of discord among all their allies, and occasion inactivity even among the neutral powers.

Coasts and seas stained with blood and covered with dead bodies; the horrors of war extending from pole to pole, between Africa, Asia and America, as well throughout the sea that separates us from the new world, as throughout the vast extent of the pacific ocean: such has been the spectacle exhibited in the two last wars, in which all the powers of Europe have been alternately shaken, or have distinguished themselves by some remarkable exertion.<sup>5</sup> The earth, however, was depopulated, and commerce did not supply the losses it had sustained; the lands were exhausted by taxes, and the channels of navigation did not assist the progress of agriculture. The loans of the state previously ruined the fortunes of the citizens by usurious profits, the forerunners of bankruptcy. Even those powers that were victorious oppressed by the conquests they had made, and having acquired a greater extent of land than they could keep or cultivate, were involved in the ruin of their enemies. The neutral powers who were desirous of enriching themselves in peace, in the midst of this commotion were exposed and tamely submitted to insults more disgraceful than the defeats of an open war.

How highly impolitic are those commercial wars, equally injurious to all the nations concerned, without being advantageous to such as are not engaged in them; those wars where the sailors become soldiers, and the merchant ships are turned into privateers; where the traffic between the mother countries and their colonies is interrupted, and the price of their reciprocal commodities is raised!

What a source of political abuses arises from those treaties of commerce which are productive of war! Those exclusive privileges which one

5. [Probably refers to the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48) and the Seven Years War (1756–63).]

nation acquires from another, either for a traffic of luxury, or for the necessities of life! A general freedom granted to industry and commerce is the only treaty which a maritime power should enforce at home, or negotiate abroad. Such a conduct would make the people who pursued it be considered as the benefactors of the human race. The more labour was encouraged upon land, and the greater number of ships there were at sea, so much the more important to them would be the advantages they pursue and obtain by negotiations and by war. For there will be no increase of riches in any country, if there be no industry among its neighbours, who can acquire nothing but by articles of exchange, or by the means of gold and silver. But without commerce and industry neither metals, nor manufactures of value can be obtained; nor can either of these sources of riches exist without liberty. The indolence of one nation is prejudicial to all the rest, either by increasing their labour, or by depriving them of what it ought to produce. The effect of the present system of commerce and industry is the total subversion of order.

The want of the fine fleeces of Spain is retrieved by the flocks of England, and the silk manufactures of Italy are carried on even in Germany; the wines of Portugal might be improved, were it not for the exclusive privileges granted to a particular company. The mountains of the north and south would be sufficient to supply Europe with wood and metals, and the vallies would produce a greater plenty of corn and fruits. Manufactures would be raised in barren countries, if these could be supplied with plenty of the necessities of life by a free circulation. Whole provinces would not be left uncultivated in the heart of a country in order to fertilize some unwholesome morasses, where, while the people are supported by the productions of the land, the influence of the air and the water tends to their destruction. We should not see all the rich produce of commerce confined to particular cities of a large kingdom,<sup>6</sup> as the privileges and fortunes of the whole people are to particular families. Circulation would be quicker, and the consumption increased. Each province would cultivate its favourite production, and each family its own little field: and under every roof there would be one child to spare

6. [The reference is probably to France, which was frequently criticized by contemporaries for its uneven prosperity.]

for the purposes of navigation and the improvement of the arts. Europe, like China, would swarm with multitudes of industrious people.—Upon the whole, the freedom of trade would insensibly produce that universal peace which a brave but humane monarch once considered not as merely chimerical. The system of the happiness of nations arising from the improvement of reason would be founded on a turn for calculation and the spirit of oeconomy, which would prove a more effectual security of morals, than the visionary ideas of superstition. These presently disappear as soon as passions exert themselves, while reason gains strength and advances to maturity along with them.

## *Glossary*

*Addict* To dedicate; to be “addicted” to something is to be dedicated to it in either a healthy or an unhealthy sense.

*Commerçant* Someone who engages in the act of buying and selling; the term only came into general use in the eighteenth century; it does not appear in either the Furetière or the Académie Française dictionaries of the 1690s, nor in the ARTFL (American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language) database for the seventeenth century.

*Commerce* The act or process of buying and selling merchandise; figuratively, ordinary communication and correspondence with someone either for business reasons or for social ones, as in phrases such as “the commerce between the sexes,” “a commerce of friendship,” “a commerce of self-love.” The figurative uses have been signalled in the text.

*Contrat de constitution* An annuity; the creation of a pension, a charge, or some other legally binding instrument for conveying annual monetary return; the annual revenue (*rente*) is also sometimes called a constitution.

*Cultivateur* Whoever actually works the land, not to be confused with its owner; usually connoting a relatively poor farmer. Became an important term only in the eighteenth century, especially with the Physiocrats. The term does not appear in the Académie Française dictionary and is described as “suspect” by Furetière.

*Fermier* Whoever possesses the rights to harvest the fruits of a landed property (or, by extension, of a public office such as a tax jurisdiction), whether the owner or a tenant farmer.

*Laboureur* Literally, the person whose occupation is to work the land, by moving it or turning it over, either for himself or for someone else, irrespective of ownership. An independent peasant, often of some means, sometimes with some social pretensions.

*Lettre de cachet* Letter with a royal seal used for issuing an order of incarceration, without recourse to the courts.

*Marchand* A merchant; someone whose principal occupation consists in buying and selling; alternatively, someone who has products manufactured for the purpose of selling them. Thus, often used in phrases containing the name of the product in question, such as “merchant drapers,” “merchant-booksellers,” “silk merchants.”

*Métayer* Farm worker who offers his labor to a landowner in exchange for a share in the produce. A widespread practice in many parts of France in the Old Regime.

*Moeurs* Acquired or natural manners or morals, either for good or ill, for an individual or a people. The term can carry a descriptive or a prescriptive connotation.

*Négociant* Merchant or banker who engages in trade either in currency or in merchandise; often connoting the wholesale or maritime trade.

*Patrie* The place, area, or region where one is born; literally, fatherland. Acquires a national connotation only during and especially after the eighteenth century. Before then, the dictionaries sometimes specify that it can refer to the specific locale, province, state, or empire of birth.

*Police* The general order observed and maintained by law and custom in a city or state. Especially concerns the conditions of sale of goods and merchandise by merchants and artisans, and the provisioning of the people, also the general cleanliness and security of a usually urban population. Sometimes the antonym is “barbarism.”

*Prerogative* An exclusive and special privilege, especially as it concerns the rights of monarchy.

*Propriétaire* Legal owner of land or other property.

*Rente* The annual revenue from land or money; an agreed monetary return on the alienation of landed property; the annual return on a sum of money alienated by *contrat de constitution*.

*Rentier* Literally, the holder of an annuity or other source of regular income; figuratively, a person of independent means, a bourgeois who lives off his regular revenue without engaging in trade or industry.

*Taille* A direct tax levied mostly on land, calculated according to the status of either the individual (*taille personnelle*) or the property (*taille réelle*), depending on local law and custom.





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