

is true, the trader and his traffic have been more lightly esteemed. During the 500 years known as the dark ages, the state of society in Europe was too sluggish and sleepy for the free exercise of commerce, or the correct estimation of its employments. Even in the succeeding age when old Froissart wrote,—

“Of bold men’s bloody combatings and gentle ladies’ tears;” such vulgar affairs as commerce and industry were not thought worthy of honorable mention. That generation had still to learn, that

“There exists  
A higher than the warrior’s excellence;  
That vast and sudden deeds of violence,  
Adventures wild and wonders of the moment,  
These are not they which generate  
The calm the blissful and enduring mighty.”

But the stirring excited times, with their deeds of daring and violence so admirably chronicled by Froissart, engendered principles on which our commercial as well as our social and political systems have since found a sure and solid foundation. Of these the most important was the principle of association. It built free cities, encouraged commerce, and secured wealth and political importance to the people. Freedom of thought and action, directed by reciprocity of interests, soon brought commerce into that position of prominence and importance which it naturally occupies in all free and enlightened communities.

“With the benefits of commerce,” says an eloquent and philosophical writer, “or the ready exchange of commodities, every individual is enabled to avail himself to the utmost of the peculiar advantages of his place; to work on the peculiar materials with which nature has furnished him; to humour his genius or disposition, and betake himself to the task in which he is peculiarly qualified to succeed. The inhabitant of the mountain may betake himself to the culture of his woods and the manufacture of his timber; the owner of pasture lands may betake himself to the care of his herds; the owner of the clay-pit to the manufactory of his pottery, and the husband man to the culture of his field or the rearing of his cattle. And any one commodity, however it may form but a small part in the accommodations of human life, may, under the facility of commerce, find a market in which it may be exchanged for what will procure any other part or the whole: so that the owner of the clay-pit, or the industrious potter, without producing any one article immediately fit to supply his own necessities, may obtain possession of all he wants, and commerce, in which it appears, that commodities are merely exchanged and nothing produced is, nevertheless, in its effects, very productive, because it ministers a facility, and an encouragement to every artist in multiplying the productions of his own art; thus adding greatly to the mass of wealth in the world in being the occasion that much is produced.” (*Ferguson’s Principles of Moral Science*).

We have here an outline of the territorial as well as the individual division of labour, in both of which commerce exerts such a stimulating as well as a diffusing influence. Not only does commerce enable the inhabitants of the same village or township to continue their separate efforts to accomplish some common object; but it also enables those of different provinces and kingdoms