

So far as we can judge from the view we can get of the subject, the Divine mind contemplated this earth as the sphere of man's noblest activities, and in providing for his progress, for the discipline of his moral faculties and for his intellectual nature, He so constructed the earth that commerce should become a science, and, that while it should administer to man's physical wants, it should at the same time contribute to the adornment and development of his mental and moral being. In order that man might not fail of this, He distributed with a lavish hand the gold and silver in the crevices of the mountains. He set the sturdy oak and the pine in the Northern forests. He gave the cotton and the corn to the rich valleys of the South and West. He filled the caverns of the earth with coal and oil, and deposited the pearls and gems in the depth of the sea. So, that while in every land there are the staples and the luxuries, an exchange of commodities is a necessity, and while the American fills his home with the productions of foreign lands, the streets of the cities of ancient learning and wealth are lighted from the oil wells of his native land. The desire for wealth has always been a spur to human exertion and the possession of wealth has been and ever must be a source of power to the individual and the state. Gold is the sinews of war and the amount of gold possessed by any nation is the measure of its material value. Before the rise of commerce the only inter-

course nations held with each other was that of warfare.

"There were then the only two sources of wealth, agriculture and pillage." "Cyrus led the Persian armies to the rich provinces of Asia for the express purpose of plunder." "The Romans who were then masters of the world arrogated to themselves all treasures." Having heard of the fabulous riches of one of the kings of Egypt, "they passed a law by which they constituted themselves the heirs of a living monarch and confiscated the dominion of an ally." Such was the state of the world when commerce began its career. It entered the arena as an educator, it laid its fashioning hand on every department of life, it transformed hostile nations into admiring and devoted friends and bound them together in their efforts to subdue the earth and make it yield up its treasures to the will of man. Although it did not abolish war, it showed the highway to the golden age by developing new industries and making attractive and possible the arts of peace. Commerce began to manifest its powers a thousand years before the Christian era. It originated among the Phœnicians and, although subjected to many adverse influences and suffering many reverses, it has steadily gained in extent, power and influence and at the present time it is in a great measure shaping the policy of all nations and projecting enterprises which cheer the hearts and brighten the homes of millions of the human race.