

channels of industry ; the reciprocal connexion there is between most branches of trade, and the mutual assistance 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 all new undertakings : In a word, he must know the art of making all other nations tributary to his own, and to make his own fortune with that of his country, or rather to enrich himself by extending the general prosperity of mankind. Such are the objects that fall under the profession of a merchant.

But above all it is a trader's business to pry into the depths of the human heart, and to treat with his equals in appearance, as if they were honest, but, in reality, as if they were men of no probity. The difficulty of the Science is less owing to the multiplicity of objects, than to the rapaciousness of those who profess it. The thirst of gain spreads over commerce a spirit of avarice that contracts every thing, even the means of amassing.

The jealousy of trade between States is nothing more than a secret conspiracy to ruin each other, without enriching either. One single mean and wicked man is able to introduce a hundred restraints into Europe. Prohibitions in commerce, and extortions in the finance, have given rise to smugglers and galley slaves, to customs and monopolies, to pirates and excisemen. Centinels, and obstacles are placed in all parts of the sea, and of the land. The merchant is exposed to all the snares of an insidious legislation that mingles the offence with the prohibition, and the penalty with the offence. A man becomes culpable without knowing it, or without meaning to be so : he is arrested, plundered, and taxed, tho' he is all the while innocent. The rights of the people are violated by their Protectors ; the rights of the citizen are invaded by the citizen ; the courtier is perpetually tormenting the Statesman, and the contractor oppresses the Merchant. Such is the state of commerce in times of peace.

But what a picture does commerce exhibit in time of war ! It is natural for a people pent up in the frozen regions of the north to wrest iron from their churlish soil, and go sword in hand to reap the harvest of other nations. Hunger is an excuse for their ravages. They must live by carnage when they have no corn. But when a nation enjoys an extensive commerce, and from their own superfluities can supply, and subsidise other states, what interest can they have in declaring war against industrious nations, to obstruct their navigation, and, in a word, to forbid them to live, on the pain of Death ? Why do they arrogate to themselves an exclusive branch of trade, and a particular right of fishing and sailing, as if the sea were to be divided into acres as well as the land ? We can certainly discover the motives of such wars. Jealousy of commerce is nothing more than a jealousy of power. But have any people the right to obstruct a work they cannot execute themselves, and to condemn another nation to idleness, because they chuse to devote themselves to it ? A war of commerce is a contradiction in