

It will be universally admitted, that the prosperity of a state consists in its strength and in its riches.

These two words are indeed almost synonymous, because a state cannot be powerful without being rich, or rich without being powerful, in the political sense of these words.

An independent state is of course more or less rich.

Its riches increase by population, and population by agriculture and commerce.

Commerce is excited by industry, and industry by money, which is the center from which every object receives an influence.

These advantages, when united, form the true riches of a state, and stimulate one another to reproduction.

They also constitute the basis of fictitious riches, called credit.

A free government possesses the most powerful means of creating and making use of these fictitious riches,