

to apply themselves, in an especial manner, to those callings, for the successful prosecution of which the district or country they occupy gives them some peculiar advantage.

The obvious benefits accruing to society from the division of labour, would be almost inoperative but for the intervening accommodation of commerce. The mechanic, manufacturer or producer, after spending a goodly portion of his time, labour, or capital, in fitting his wares for the market, might have to waste as much more, before he could meet with a remunerative exchange for his commodities. His attention is necessarily confined for the time to the prosecution of his peculiar avocation. He has not the means nor opportunity to ascertain the best market when he may require it. He would very probably often find, that he had been labouring to supply an article not well suited to the wants of society, or even not required at all. The merchant comes to his aid. It is his study to ascertain, as well as stimulate, the demand, and to watch and furnish the supply of articles, in the locality over which the operations of his trade extend. He maintains an intelligence with the producer who is thus enabled to give his whole time and attention to his proper duties; to obtain the most reliable information as to the kind and quality of his goods, that can be profitably disposed of, and to have them sent by the cheapest conveyance to the best markets. Commerce is not only one of the most important divisions of labour; but it supplies, besides, the combined principles of motion and regulation to the whole industrial machine.

The vastly increased facility of communication in modern times is one of the most striking features of our age. And it is to the influence of commerce that we owe its prodigious development. The community of interests and advantages which first induce men to seek intercourse with their fellows, early lead to the establishment of highways. Ships, too, of ruder or more scientific construction, trimmed their sale to the wind. Canals were cut to make a cheaper highway of waters. But the activity and enterprise of commerce, rendering man familiar with new objects, he was inspired with a desire to obtain more and more. Invention cleared the way. Railways and steamships lend a new and mighty impetus to the extension of traffic. The electric telegraph, in fine, annihilates space and places nations side by side. The rapid and cheap communication now in practice all over the world, promoted as it has been in its advancement, by the stimulating influences of commerce, communicates, in its turn, a large increase to the activity and profits of trade. But results still more important may be attributed to this facility of communication, when we consider how much it has done to ameliorate humanity, to diffuse Christian and scientific truth, and to enhance those higher social excellences to which more particular allusion will afterwards be made.

In the trade of nation with nation we find an extension of the same operations which have been described as occurring between individuals in more circumscribed limits. The territorial division of labour is more especially exemplified in this enlarged sphere. The services of commerce in accommodating the desires and necessities of individuals in adjacent localities,—the facility of profitable exchange which it affords to different classes of producers, is vastly increased in value and importance when it lends its assistance to the intercourse of nations. Different countries have peculiar advantages for producing certain classes of articles. One is excellent for corn, another for wine, a third for fruit, and yet another may, from a bountiful supply of labour, cap-