

MILITARY NATIONS & COMMERCIAL NATIONS

Commerce, we all know, is the source of nations' prosperity, but, we should also consider it as strong means of progress & an element of power & grandeur.

Commerce has given England far more glorious days than her powerful navy. England's merchant service, carrying her produces to the remotest parts of the globe, has made her widely renowned, increased her wealth & left everywhere immense benefits of all kinds.

Take now the instance of the United States of America, who yesterday only appeared as a nation, & whose influence today preponderates in the destiny of the whole world, owing to their merchant service which so gloriously carries the American flag over every ocean around the world.

These are not military nations; bloodshed & extermination is not their motto, but their peaceful power lies in their constantly increasing commerce.

What a contrast now, if from these powerful nations we look down to the republics of South America! Their soil is fertile & considerable are their natural advantages, but they lose their strength in useless disputes & dreamy conceptions.

Unfortunately, we need not fetch our examples so far off. Should not Spain rank amongst the most powerful nations through the fertility of her soil, her geological richness, the extensiveness of her coasts & even the special intellect of the nation!

It is wonderful what intellectual effort is spent here in fruitless political struggles, & amassing the capital & energies lost thereby. And what for? Yesterday, we lost our colonies. Today, we are losing our credit, & as we anxiously look into the abyss of future, there stands the question full of awe & horror: What shall we lose after we have lost everything?

France, wiser through terrible a lesson, has done away with the traditions of the latin races, convinced as she is that a nation's power should be based upon her wealth, & that the latter is in no respect to be found in struggles & tournaments which only satisfy puerile vanity or by which an even less innocent end is aimed at.

Italy, arising from her proverbial "farniente" seeks new markets for her produces, understanding at last that the way followed by Spain & Portugal is the sure way to ruin.

Whilst Switzerland & Belgium are happy, though small, & with but little natural advantages, we see the immense empire of Russia dreaming terrible nightmares which from time to time shake her & disturb her: the sleeping of indolence & barbarity.

It is this commercial genius, mocked at in Spain by a generation of fruitless poets, which placed in the guns of the United States' fleet the shell which was to destroy our navy during the last war. It is this genius again, so evil-spoken of by philisophers who have never been able to descend into the reality of life, which waves the

British flag respected & powerful, as a symbol & personification of Commerce, wherever on earth a man can be.

In the Roma of the Ceasars, the athlete who was to fight in the circus, used to strengthen his body, give all the possible elasticity to his muscles & regulate the tension of his nerves, & thus ready, fought for a triumph which he did not always obtain, but which at any rate was within his reach; & we, with debilitated organisms & corrupted minds, pretend to be ready for a struggle which claims the full strength of the body in aid of all our moral energy.

The modern Hercules is the steamer & the locomotive, which free the world from monsters & in their footsteps leave gold, that blood of the social body & peace, that reposal for the mind & welfare for the body.

Commerce is the nerve of our present Society

The exchange of produces, credit, multiplying the capital so as to render it effective in various different points at a same time, as if reflected by a multitude of looking glasses & leaving profits in every one of them, this is Commerce!

Alike water, evaporating from the sea, & falling again in fecunding rain, returns to the sea after leaving on its way the drop which ripens the germ, the atom of oxygen which renders air life, the light hydrogen, powerful agent of vegetal development, & the numerous elements which in the laboratory of nature are nutriment & life: movement for creating power, phosphorus for the blood, spirit in the substance, so is Commerce.

Changes; transformations: a mass of atoms constantly modified & which in all & every phase of their multiple life, produce life themselves & animate the substance. Thus is Commerce.

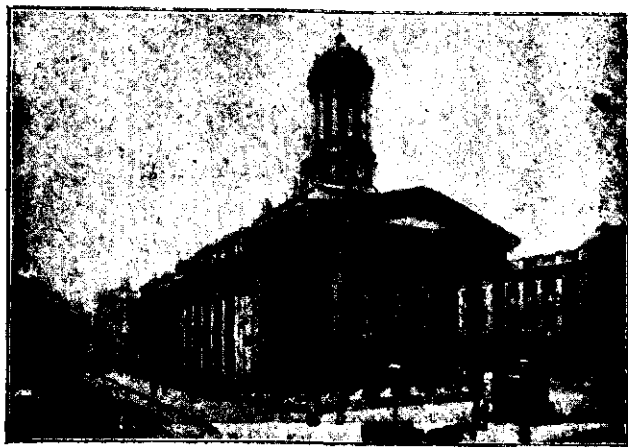
Commerce means wealth. See f. i. commercial nations as England & the States of America.

Lack of commerce means death. See our indolent peninsula, Portugal & Spain.

Let us make an effort!

Let us enter into life. That life which is transformation & changes; the change of poverty into wealth & of evil into good: Commerce.

GLASGOW



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