

A Discourse on Public Economy and Commerce

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The Translator to the Reader

Private oeconomy is the fruit of former prodigality. Nothing begets in us so forcibly an attention to the management of our finances, as those difficulties which profusion at length inevitably produces. In like manner national profusion seems first to have given rise to the serious study of public oeconomy. Necessity is the mother of invention; and it is certain that the science of finances has been carried to its present degree of refinement and perfection, not by the theoretical disquisitions of speculative men; but because ministers, from the gradual augmentation of public expence in all the different countries of Europe, have been forced to imagine every possible means of supplying the urgent wants of the state. Hence it is easy to perceive why it is of late years become so fashionable a study in this country. I wish we understood it as well in practice as in theory. But here too the parallel holds, between public and private life, for nothing is more common than to find extravagant and expensive men declaiming on the nature and advantages of oeconomy and good management. However, the importance of the study of public oeconomy will not admit of a doubt. It is fully demonstrated in the following discourse, which was pronounced by the celebrated author of the "Treatise on Crimes and Punishments" at the opening of a new professorship instituted last winter at Milan, for teaching this science.

To make the public acquainted with this laudable institution, was one of the translator's motives for publishing the discourse. Many of our English travellers, who, as members of parliament, are entrusted with the disposal of the public money, may think a course of prelections on so important a subject fully as worthy of their attention as the mere objects of curiosity, which commonly during their stay in Italy, employ all the time they can spare from the hurry of pleasure and dissipation. The genius of the author almost insures the merit of his lectures. Though his modesty had long been a bar to that encouragement which his talents deserve, yet it is known that he was invited to Petersburg by the most flattering offers, to assist in digesting the code of laws lately published by the Czarina. Domestick ties, joined to the desire of devoting his abilities to the service of his own country, made him decline those offers, and not many months ago this new chair was instituted for him, and I believe is always to be filled by a person of noble birth; a regulation which in that country, may be attended with advantages.

The nature of a public discourse does not admit of minute discussion; but the smallest productions of real genius, are always interesting, and even instructive. I know not if a personal acquaintance with the author renders me partial to him; but I cannot think that I need make any apology for publishing a performance, where, if I have been at all able to transfuse into the translation the spirit of the original, the man of taste will admire a rich flow of manly eloquence peculiar to this author; the philosopher, his profound and comprehensive views; and every lover of his country, that bold and undaunted enthusiasm in favour of the rights of mankind, which nothing but true patriotism and genuine virtue can inspire.

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I am appointed by our august sovereign to teach the principles of public oeconomy and commerce, or those sciences which furnish the means or increasing the riches of a state, and applying them to the most useful purposes. In this undertaking, if my spirits are damped, from a doubt of my abilities being equal to the difficulties of so vast an object, I am encouraged and emboldened by the reflection that I am to execute this talk in my native country; a country where at least I will not be constrained to cover truth with an artificial veil, nor to bring all my examples from different nations, or the musty pages of neglected authors. On the contrary, from the slightest review of what has been already done in this fortunate province, I behold an equal abundance of past monuments and present proofs of the most important maxims of public oeconomy. The lands surveyed; contributions equally distributed; magistracies erected to guard the opulence of the state, or to protect the sciences.

Among the striking instances of the sovereign's favour, one of the greatest is undoubtedly the choice of that illustrious personage(1*) who is at the head of affairs; one to whom the profound branches of literature are not less familiar than the sage maxims of government, while the noble virtues of affability, humanity, and equanimity, bestow additional lustre on the high rank in which he is placed.

Under such a mild and enlightened administration, in the lofty shade of the Imperial laurel, the humble laurels of the muses no longer wither and decay, but renew their strength and verdure. And in that country which gave birth to Cardan(2*) the arts and sciences revive, without which the easy but turbulent weakness of the people, either stagnates in slothful inactivity, or is torn by the violence of destructive prejudices. --

The whole extent of the views of government, with respect to so interesting an object, is not yet made known. In the mean time, from a generous preference, orders are given to teach in the language of the country that science, which formerly, from an useless or rather hurtful degree of caution, was with-held from public scrutiny and examination. All sciences, but more especially the political, are enlarged and brought nearer to evidence, by undergoing numerous and repeated shocks from the various discussion of different men. General knowledge gives such weight to public opinion as to prevent abuses. And feeling on the other hand a thousand prejudices often oppose the wisest designs, and corrupt, in the eyes of the subject, the purest and most beneficial decisions of administration; while ridiculous fears, envy, prepossession, and error, sanctified by use, stand ever in the way of the most useful innovations; it is surely of the highest importance, by diffusing light among the multitude, to dispel these dangerous phantoms, and render in this manner obedience to superior authority readier and more easy, because spontaneous and founded in reason.

It is therefore self-evident, that nothing can be of greater utility than the supporting this science by public authority, and encouraging the study of it by those citizens, who are desirous of rendering themselves worthy to be trusted by their sovereign, with the jealous custody of his interests, and those of the nation.

In guiding us through the unfortunate combinations of politicks, we must not believe that blind experience and

mechanical habit can supply the place of sure principles, and maxims drawn from reason. Neither will the knowledge of general truths suffice, without descending to those particular ones, which occasion such numerous and diversified modifications in the theories of this science. It is not alone necessary, for example, to know, that there are four principal means of promoting trade; to wit, concurrence in the price of things, oeconomy in the price of labour, cheapness of carriage, and low interest of money. It is not sufficient to know, that industry is enlivened, by easing the duties on the importation of the first materials, and on the exportation of them when manufactured; and by loading those which are imposed on imported manufactures, and exported materials; that every oeconomical operation may be reduced to the means of procuring the greatest possible quantity of labour and action among the members of a state; and that in this alone consists true and primary riches, much rather than in the abundance of a precious metal, which, being nothing but a symbol, is always obedient to the call of industry and toil, and, in spite of every obstruction, flies from idleness and sloth. Along with these maxims we must attend to the particular situation of a country; the different circumstances of population, climate, and fertility of soil, whether natural, or the gift of industry; the nature of the frontiers; the wants of adjacent countries, and the various kinds of productions, with the arts which they support.

Besides all these considerations we must be careful never to lose sight of the universal bias of human nature, which is much more securely regulated by obstacles than by prohibitions; which blindly precipitates itself after present and immediate advantages neglectful of the future; loving variety and change, and in the circle of customary things (the examples of which have a stronger influence than any reasoning) desirous of doing the most with the smallest possible fatigue; being stimulated or curbed by the certainty of either good or evil, and debased by arbitrariness or uncertainty.

Such great and luminous principles as these, adapted with accuracy and diligence to the particular circumstances of every state, must be imprinted on the pliant understandings of young men, if we would habituate them to the spirit of calculation, and of rapid and profound comparison, which teaches us to surprize truth in her most intricate and secret recesses, and whence alone the science of the lawgiver can attain perfection.

With such views public oeconomy must diffuse her light through the obscure and winding labyrinths of private jurisprudence. Those whose province it is to judge or treat of the concerns of individuals, so often complicated with the affairs of public bodies of men, will learn to avoid the fallacious and fluctuating rules of private equity; and, in the interpretation of doubtful and ambiguous(3*) cases, they will adhere to the eternal and invariable laws of utility and general equity, all which are built on the maxims of public oeconomy.

Besides, whoever wishes to distinguish himself in his own science, must not confine himself within the limits of that science, and neglect such as are analogous, or border on it. All truths are linked together by an immense chain, and they are always more variable, more uncertain, and more confused, in proportion as they are more limited and restrained; more simple, greater, and more certain when expanded into a wider space, or raised to a more eminent point of view.

In proof of this we need only call to mind the aeras and countries, where the sciences, being buried in feudal anarchy, and silenced by the din of arms, private jurisprudence became the

public lawgiver. To hinder the free internal circulation of commodities. -- To load the expeditious business of commerce with dull and tardy formalities: -- To dream of rendering a state opulent by imposing stoical sumptuary laws, with a view to check the expence of the rich individual, and thus dry up the sources of industry, blunt every spur to labour, and deaden in the ambitious the hope of bettering their condition, which is as it were the central heat of every body politick: -- To reduce artists almost to monastical discipline, condensing them into corporations, or rather litigious factions, with the power of levying taxes on themselves, and prescribing themselves laws (the surest means of making the arts languish since their nourishment is liberty;) -- To leave a free scope to those people who (perhaps from respectable motives) formed institutions(4*) of most dangerous consequence, since they tended to establish this general canon, which may be termed anti-political, "Let inactivity be nourished at the public expence, and receive the reward of sweat and labour:" -- These and such like effects have flowed from confining jurisprudence within the bounds of private justice, while it ought to embrace all the great principles of morality and politicks.

Further: the study of public oeconomy must necessarily enlarge and elevate the views of private oeconomy, by suggesting the means of uniting our own interest with that of the publick. When accustomed to consider the affairs of the common weal, and often to call up the ideas of general good, the natural partiality we bear to our own reasonings, and to objects which afford us so much intellectual pleasure, re-kindles the languishing love of our country. We no longer look upon ourselves as solitary parts of society, but as the children of the public, of the laws, and of the sovereign. The sphere of our feelings becomes greater and more lively; the selfish passions diminish, and social affections are dilated, and gather strength from the power of imagination and habit; and measuring objects according to their real dimensions, we lose sight of every mean and groveling disposition; vices which spring continually from a false measure of things.

Hence, by comparing the various professions of men, we view with satisfaction and wonder the mutual chain of reciprocal services, by means of which those professions become respectable and dear to us; not in proportion to the pomp with which they are cloathed, but according to their real usefulness, and the difficulties necessarily surmounted in the pursuit of them. Hence we learn what respect is due to the haughty indolence of those who bury their poverty among the antiquated images of their forefathers, and trust for their support to the beneficent and toilsome industry of the husbandman. Hence we learn that if admiration is due to the austere and solitary monk, we ought not to look down with contempt on the humble father of a family, who parcels out a morsel of bread bathed in his sweat among his numerous offspring, the tender hope of his country.

Lastly; one of the great advantages of this science is, that it is not confined to the solitary philosopher in his closet, nor occupied about objects remote from the common business of life. Its objects are such as make the most frequent topic of discussion in every company and society of men, and every public occurrence affords an opportunity of applying it. Such a study then, by internal conviction, and that calm and clear light, which solid science kindles in our minds, will teach us to guard, on the one hand, against those venerable prejudices, so often handed down to us from our forefathers by a kind of family

tradition, and, on the other, against the habitual spirit(5*) of complaint and discontent, which never ceases in every age and every country to work upon the distrustfulness and docility of the ignorant.

Yet this science, so useful, and even necessary, has been one of the latest of unfolding itself in the human mind, nor is it yet arrived at that ultimate degree of perfection of which it seems susceptible. All the arts and sciences have taken their rise from our wants; either such as are primary, that is, those which man feels when solitary and abandoned to himself; or the secondary, that is, those we acquire when combined in society, by observation and mutual imitation, as curiously, the desire of being distinguished, that of shunning what the French term ennui(6*), and so forth. For in the state of society, while we learn to supply our natural wants with more facility, the frequency of our intercourse gives new activity to our faculties, and augments the number of our desires. Public oeconomy then has always existed in some degree, as well as commerce, in every state of society. In every age the exchange of things for things, either superfluous or necessary, has been practised, and of actions for things, and actions for actions. This is the fundamental principle of all traffick. In every age men, united together from some motive of reciprocal advantage, have been forced, in order to maintain their union, and gain the end proposed by it, to concur in a certain number of operations for the public good, and to put the direction or produce of such operations into the hands of a supreme magistrate. This is the fundamental principle of every species of finances, and of their administration. But knowledge in these matters was solely acquired by the confused and contradictory lessons of time, the urgent presence of want, and the instantaneous and hasty fear of danger; not from a chain of observations and truths, deduced regularly the one from the other, and adapted to the sum total of the wants of society.

It is necessary that a number of ages should elapse, productive of an immense series of facts and experiments, in order to help man forward in his slow and intricate progress towards the oeconomical sciences, and generate the quantity of minute circumstances requisite to determine some bold and happy genius to bring them into open day, in spite of the opposition of private interest, and the fantastical illusions of prevention and error. In effect, when we take a retrospective view of the first periods of society, we find mankind thinly scattered upon the earth, when compared with the present numbers, yet multiplied beyond the means which nature spontaneously offered of supplying their wants. Hemmed in by rivers which they could not pass, and surrounded by mountains to them insurmountable, they barely exchanged the most necessary commodities, oftener making use of force to acquire, what in their turn they were deprived of by the same violence. The first occupation, as the most easy and necessary to mankind, was the chase. The continual practice of hunting taught men to distinguish the beasts of pasture, and they became shepherds. In this more calm and indolent state the spirit of observation increased; so did the objects and inducements to commerce, which was ill adapted to the former rude and ferocious way of life. Wants still multiplying along with population, it became necessary to second by art, the spontaneous productions of nature. Thus agriculture took its rise. But the discovery of metals was what carried nature into a new sphere of things, and raised our faculties to a higher degree of exercise and perfection.

The durability of these for the purposes of art; the desire of being distinguished by lasting monuments of industry and strength; the trembling anxiety of mortals in offering up to the Divinity whatever was dearest and most useful; all concurred to promote the search after metals, and to stamp a value on the different kinds in proportion to their scarcity, and the difficulty of the search. Being afterwards marked in a distinctive manner, and reduced to a convenient form and division, they came by degrees to be used as the medium for the exchange of every commodity, as perhaps the most necessary and generally useful productions may formerly have been. Such was the origin of money, a vehicle which has added surprizing mobility and velocity to the political machine. At length the hardy perseverance of men inhabiting the sea coasts, by teaching and improving navigation, increased the communication between different nations, and the transport and exchange of the various commodities and luxuries of life.

Asia, in the Epochs we have a knowledge of, was the first emporium of trade. The fame of the naval exploits of the Phenicians still resounds among us. Those enterprising mariners drew, with unwearied industry, all the gifts of nature from the East, from Africa, and from Europe, to their own narrow and barren district, and again exporting and diffusing them where they were deficient, reduced to the condition of tributaries the other nations who remained within the limits of their several countries, in a continual state of emulation and war.

At a more certain aera, Carthage, a colony of Phenicians settled on the Mediterranean, rose on the ruins of Tyre and Sydon; embraced the eastern coasts of Africa by means of the Red Sea, and the ports of Elath and Eziongeber; distributed to the other nations gold and perfumes; and urged her fleets through the Mediterranean to the western coasts of Europe, even as far as the Cassiteredes, (7*) now the British isles, bring tin from thence; and from Spain wool, iron, cotton, gold, and silver. -- In the mean time Greece flourished by her liberty, and the most sublime inventions of human genius. But divided into jealous republics, ever at variance with one another, unless when union was necessary to support her independence against the Barbarians, she does not seem to have made commerce an early occupation. Indeed, it would have ill-suited the turbulence of her democratical governments, or the parsimonious and disdainful severity of the military spirit, so much cherished in some of her states.

Yet the Phocceans, an Athenian colony, founded Marseilles, the constant rival of Carthage; while Rome was gradually rising from an obscure origin, till, actuated by ambition and the love of conquest, she profited of the alliance of other republics, jealous of Carthage, to destroy her; and then reduced those very allies to be her tributaries and subjects.

Before this epoch Alexander the great had founded a new empire. By his conquests Egypt, and even the remote countries of India, deemed till then impenetrable, were laid open, and those distant seas visited by the fleets of unknown nations. Alexandria grew to be the second emporium of the trade between the eastern and western worlds, and continued under the reigns of the Ptolomies, to enjoy the opulence accruing from that happy circumstance. But Rome at length, by her victorious arms, triumphed over all the monuments of antient industry, and appropriated to herself the riches of the world. The immense tributes of so many conquered provinces formed at that time the sole objects of public oeconomy. -- The removal of the seat of empire to Byzantium (8*) produced an epoch fruitful in

consequences. The most immediate was a great fermentation of political and oeconomical affairs round the Hellespont. But that stimulus which arises from the emulation of powerful neighbours was now lost. Surrounded by mean or barbarous nations, the sovereign power of the empire fell from its vigour and dignity; and though the clamorous voice of necessity was not heard at that center to which all the tributes of the earth gravitated, yet misery and slavery at length kindled despair and courage in every breast. The western empire was torn to pieces by the northern nations. Every art, every species of industry lost. In Italy alone trade and navigation were still preserved in some degree by the active and restless disposition of the inhabitants. The antient republican spirit of that country brooded under the ashes of the Roman empire, till by degrees it broke the chains which had been imposed by a ferocious but ignorant people. Liberty and industry arose from amid the marshes of the Adriatick.(9*) Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, though continually at war among themselves, preserved nevertheless in the face of all Europe, the domination of the sea, and the superiority of manufactures. The Italian fleets, by the way of Alexandria carried on all the trade of the Levant; and the other European nations consigned to the Italians, as being alone capable of manufacturing them, all the first materials which their different countries produced; whilst, among them, the feudal system had deadened the force of administration, and bent their necks under the most oppressive species of despotism. The voyages of the Italians to the northern seas rendered Flanders a convenient place for depositing their merchandize. Awakened by their example the Flemish became the second manufacturers of Europe. Particular privileges bestowed upon their merchants by the counts of Flanders, animated them still farther. But their spirit was again depressed by the revocation of these privileges. Other nations profited of this imprudence; and thus England, France, Holland, and Germany by means of the Anseatic(10*) league, came to have a share in that industry and opulence which had formerly characterised the Italians alone.

The Jews(11*) persecuted by turns in every country, and that not so much from a blind zeal for religion, as the desire of seizing their riches, had recourse to the invention of bills of exchange to save their treasures from the rapaciousness of tyrannical inquisitions. This is a fundamental epoch in the history of commerce, as it augmented to a great degree the certainty and readiness of communication among the trading nations. The mariner's compass was invented, by which the Portuguese were guided to the coasts of Africa, where they formed many powerful settlements. Bartholomew Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope, a discovery which cost Italy the trade of the Indies. Soon after, Christopher Columbus (one of those daring geniuses, on whom the timid prudence of inferior understandings bestows the appellation of chimerical and romantick) laid open to Spain a new world, the fruit of long and constant perseverance, in spite of opposition, and even contempt.

The gold that abounded here in every quarter excited the avarice of the Spaniards, and stimulated their courage to such a degree, that they did not scruple to encounter the perils of an immense and unknown ocean, and the still more alarming consequences of a disease which attacked life itself in the very source. -- Torrents of blood were now poured forth, and millions of human victims sacrificed, in appearance to the God of peace, but in reality to satisfy the lust of that metal which represents every species of pleasure. But the easy, though cruel acquisition

of gold, soon rendered the immediate possessors of it neglectful of manufactures and agriculture. Mean while the other nations of Europe, though still excluded from America, were thrown into a ferment by the discovery; so that the riches the Spaniards acquired with so much ease, obeying the infallible attraction of labour and industry, only passed through their hands in order to circulate in Holland, England, and France.

Necessity and despair drove the United Provinces to industry and freedom. A few merchants of that country acquired the sovereignty of vast kingdoms in the East Indies, and (12*) the nation secured to itself an inexhaustible source of riches by the exclusive trade of the Spice Islands.

Elizabeth queen of England, aided by the wisdom of her parliament, carried the superiority of manufactures, and the dominion of the sea, to the highest pitch. The famous act of navigation(13*) was productive of the most important advantages to Great Britain, and the different trading companies, formed in imitation of those in Holland, by combining the strength of the nation, renewed the example of merchant conquerors afforded us by the antient Carthaginians.

In France, Lewis the XIVth, and his minister Colbert, awakened trade almost instantaneously. They revived every sort of industry, and nourished and sustained the fine arts, the arts of leisure and of peace, amid the ambitious enterprizes of conquest. But that fatal measure, the revocation of the(14*) edict of Nantz, soon bestowed upon her rivals a great part of her strength and resources.

In the mean time the light of those sciences that are most useful to humanity began to shine forth in Europe, having triumphed over the obscure idol of peripatetic superstition. The profound spirit of philosophy and observation extended itself to public oeconomy and commerce. Already the English had received from Bacon the first seeds of these sciences, which other illustrious men of that nation have since developed and brought to light. In France the Marischal Vauban was the first who spoke the unknown language of oeconomical reasoning, resembling in this, as well as in the profession of arms, the great Xenophon, who has left us the only antient monument we have upon this branch of politics. But the more thorough cultivation of this science was reserved for our days, when Melon, the immortal Montesquieu, Uffaritz, Ulloa, the philosopher Hume, the abbe Genovesi (founder of it in Italy) together with many others, have carried it to that height, that nothing more seems wanting, unless the last and not least difficult lineaments, to render it perfect, and of general and certain utility.

If we now turn our eyes from distant objects to our native country, a striking contrast appears between its past and present situation. It had long suffered from the thunderbolt of war(15*) which had so often broke upon it, and the no less pernicious effects of unequal taxation, and a complicated and confused system of administration. But, since the accession of the present sovereign, we have seen it raised to a happy and flourishing condition, by laws equally simple and comprehensive; laws which have removed the destructive influence of arbitrary power, and yet left in the hands of the prince every salutary means of promoting industry and public felicity. This interesting topic, too ample for present discussion, will often occur during the future prosecution of my subject.

All that remains for me at present is to promise solemnly, that, in laying open the sure principles of agriculture, commerce, manufactures, internal policy, and finances, I am

determined never to belye that sacred duty, which ought to bind all those who are intrusted with public instruction, of speaking uniformly the language of truth with clearness, simplicity, and energy. By tracing things up to their original sources, where they are less entangled among a variety of relations and modifications, I hope to establish, as far as is possible, exact and precise definitions. for by thus acquiring a knowledge of their elements we are enabled to unravel complex and intricate combinations; or, in other words, a deduction of the most simple propositions is the best means of bestowing evidence on the more general and complicated truths. A continual application of the maxims of oeconomy to our own circumstances will prevent the tediousness of abstract speculation, and I shall carefully avoid all the affected apparatus of scientific terms, as it serves no other purpose but that of rendering science mysterious and inaccessible. Nor shall I less carefully shun the pedantry of dogmatical decisions, as I do not wish to teach the native vigour of the mind to bend under the yoke of servile imitation.

I am diffident of myself. The importance of a science which has for its objects the concerns and interest of nations, makes me tremble; but I look for encouragement and assistance from the illustrious youth of Milan. The eager curiosity, the docility, fervor, and indefatigable force of mind, peculiar to the earlier period of life, will all co-operate to prevent the approaches of error, however supple and importunate, and to overthrow the force of barbarous prejudices, or pre-conceived opinions, which might otherwise rise up in this place in opposition to the timid efforts of truth, and attempt to baffle the glorious intentions of government. My wishes will be thoroughly accomplished, if I can, by the most anxious endeavours, increase the number of enlightened subjects to our sovereign, of true citizens to my country, and of virtuous men, fraught with solid knowledge, to human society.

NOTES:

1. Count Firmian, Minister Plenipotentiary for the Empress Queen in her dominions in Lombardy. He is well known to all English travellers for his love of our country, and his skill in our language. It may be said to his honour, that though this discourse was pronounced in his presence, the author's panegyric does not more than do him justice.
2. Cardan was born at Pavia in 1501. He was famous for his physical talents, and his skill in astrology; the fashionable study of the times.
3. The opposite decisions of the two supreme courts of justice, in this and the neighbouring kingdom, in a late celebrated cause, may serve both to illustrate and confirm the author's doctrine in this paragraph.
4. The author here alludes to the institution of religious orders, the most pernicious invention of misguided piety. Happily for mankind the different governments of the Catholic countries seem to vie with each other at present in the steps they are taking towards their abolition. Indeed, the French and Italians are in a fair way of accomplishing, with peace and quietness, the same reformation in religion (at least in what immediately

regards the happiness of civil society) which cost us, about two centuries ago, so much devastation and bloodshed.

5. That spirit, though less clamorous, is equally prevalent in other countries as in our own.

6. I know of no English term thoroughly expressive of noia in Italian, or ennui in French.

7. According to Camden this was properly the name of our isles of Scilly on the coast of Cornwall, from which the Phenicians fetched their tin.

8. Now Constantinople.

9. When Attila king of the Huns, invaded Italy in the Vth century, a few Paduan families, whose descendants still exist at Venice, taking refuge among the islands at the bottom of the Adriatick Sea, laid the foundation of that city, the admiration and wonder of succeeding ages, for the singularity both of its natural situation and political constitution.

10. The Anseatic or Hanseatic union was a confederacy formed at first between Bremen and Antwerp for the mutual protection of their commerce. By degrees others joined in the same league, till at length (as early as the year 1200) we find all the great cities of Europe in the list of Hans towns. They raised fleets and armies, made war on sovereign princes, and were treated with on a footing of independency. Their combined riches enabled them to advance large sums of money to the emperors and the kings of France and England, who in their turns bestowed many great privileges on them. Among others, our Henry the IIIrd incorporated them into a trading body, in acknowledgement for money lent him, as well as the services done him by their naval forces in 1206. In short, they grew to such power as at last to become the object of jealousy to those very princes who had formerly contributed to their aggrandisement; the consequences of which was, that they commanded all the cities within their jurisdiction to withdraw from the union. By this fatal blow, and a decree afterwards made by themselves to exclude every town but those which stood within the limits of the German empire (Dantzick excepted) they gradually diminished in number till they were at last reduced to Lubeck, Bremen, Hamburg, and Dantzick. In the first of these they held assemblies every three years, but for some time the league has been intirely dissolved.

11. The exactions imposed on the Jews by Henry III of England, are shocking to humanity. He had learnt this tyrannical lesson of his father, who once demanded an exorbitant sum of money from a Jew at Bristol, and, on his refusal to pay it, ordered one of his teeth to be drawn every day till he should be brought to reason. The Jew persevered till he had lost seven teeth, and then paid the sum required of him. The barbarity of the times is some excuse for those princes; but is it not surprising that not many years ago in this liberal and enlightened age, the ministers of a court in close alliance with ours had determined to banish all the Jews from their sovereign's extensive dominions, where they are very numerous; and that nothing but the vigorous remonstrances of the English minister prevented this measure from being carried into execution?

12. The decay of the Hans Towns, and their quarrels with England, contributed greatly to the growth of commerce in Holland.

13. Vide Blackstone's Comm. Ed. iii. vol. I. p. 418.

14. By the revocation of the edict of Nantz (in the year 1685) it is computed that 800,000 of her most industrious subjects were driven out of France, and that they carried along with them above five millions sterling in specie, jewels, and other effects. Philip the III^d of Spain had embraced a similar measure in that country towards the beginning of the last century. All the Moriscos, or descendents of the ancient Moors, to the number of 900,000, were banished from Spain, leaving the kingdom of Granada and the countries adjacent almost a desert, from being the best cultivated and best peopled part of his dominions. This ill-judged piece of tyranny, which his more sagacious predecessor had always rejected, had perhaps as great a share as the causes mentioned by our author, in reducing the Spaniards to the low ebb at which they have so long remained.

15. No state in Europe has been oftener ravaged by war than that of Milan, first from the ambition of its own dukes, the Galeazzi, the Visconti, and the Sforza's; and, in later times, on account of the disputed claims of the different branches of the House of Austria. It is but too probable that the present settlement of the younger branches of that family in Italy will lay a foundation for future misfortunes of the same kind to that country, if more general and important revolutions, whose seeds appear to be deeply sown in every state of Europe, do not prevent them.

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