

The Relation of Commerce to
Civilization.

by

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Commerce is the interchange of services or products between persons of different industrial functions, effected either directly or through the intervention of a third party.

It is coeval with the dawn of civilization. When people cease to supply themselves with the various articles and accommodations that are necessary to their welfare as well as the luxuries of life; and when they commence to use articles not native of their own section of country then commercial intercourse is established.

The chief principles and results of commerce are as follows.

- 1st. The division of labor among the inhabitants of the same place is established.
- 2nd. Then between neighboring places.
- 3rd. And finally between all the countries of the world.

Commerce originated with man while in the barbaric state. The man hunted, fished and warred - he obtained food for the family while on his expeditions. The wife did the cooking, planted, tended and harvested the corn and then transformed it into an edible state.

From this exchange of commodities within

the family it extended to exchanges between different families in the same tribe then tribe with tribe, nation with nation until now the exchange of articles has spread around the world. What the Esquimaux can catch in seals, fish, deer and bear is bartered for the manufactured articles of the temperate zones. What the American can produce in food materials are exchanged for spices and fruits of the tropics. What one country can produce another transforms into useful shape.

But some materials before they become of use must have a great amount of work expended upon them. For example in a coal mine it requires somebody to dig the coal, a boy to haul it to the shaft, a man to run an engine to lift it to the surface, men to unload, other to carry away, men to oversee the work, bookkeepers and so on. In great manufactures the functions are multiplied indefinitely and each man has but one particular piece of work to look after. The beneficial results springing from this division of labor have been enumerated by Prof. Geo. F. Fairchild as follows. viz:-

1. No time wasted in changing tools.
2. Less time needed to gain skill.
3. The chances are greater for the development of extraordinary skill.
4. Superior manual dexterity.
5. Each peculiarity of ability is found and fully employed.
6. Invention is made possible.
7. Oversight is very much diminished because of the above named advantages.

Aside from the advantages named above the economical use of capital will come into play. Prof. Fairchild has also given the following advantages.

1. Less shop room required.
2. The tools for each man are very much lessened in quantity.
3. The motive power is utilized constantly and variations are very much less.
4. Waste of material is less from the greater exactness in the use of materials and shorter apprenticeship.
5. Returns in the way of furnished products is very much quicker.

The territorial division of labor is one of the greatest factors in the increase of wealth and the acceleration of civilization. Under its influence different countries have found it of advantage to produce certain articles and purchase others. The prices they receive as well as the ones paid may be ascribed ^{wholly} to commerce. It is only by exchanging the surplus efforts of our own labors for the surplus efforts of others that the division of employment can be established so that individuals can apply themselves to different pursuits. By the aid of commerce an individual may locate in that section of country where the geological and climatic conditions are the most favorable to that pursuit to which he thinks himself best adapted. Besides doing better work in his particular vocation a great amount of time is saved in not having to hunt up markets for his produce; in not having to look for the articles that are a necessity to him; in saving a great expense and various other minor points. Each community can produce what is best suited to its conditions for instance New England is better adapted for manufacturing, Pennsylvania for mining as also is Colorado and various other states while the Mississippi valley is best suited for farming.

Neither of these could take the place of the other. The fruits of California or Florida could never be raised here on account of the climate. Manufacturing here would never be the success that it is in the east due to the lack of motive power and transporting facilities.

The diversity of products and productive faculties are the bonds which unite to one another the inhabitants of the same community, the city and country; different nations and even the most widely separated parts of the globe. The products of the torrid zone - tea, coffee, sugar and cocoa - furnish the breakfast for the temperate. A filament which is cultivated thousands of miles away - cotton - forms an important part of clothing in Europe. In fact people from all parts of the earth Americans, Africans, Asiatics, and Australians wear goods of European manufacture.

The progress of commerce corresponds to and is identical with the division of labor, but the progress of the division of labor is the progress of civilization so a condensed outline of its history would best show its relation to the development of civilization.

The history and progress of commerce up to about the time of the discovery of America had but one

route.

The earliest earliest road was from India through the Persian Gulf, up the Euphrates and then into the Mediterranean sea. Along this route rich carpets and stours were carried as now. Hiram sent in Solomon's navy his servants and shipmen who had knowledge of the sea and they brought gold from Ophir, great plenty of alneng trees and precious stones.

Tyre and Sidon founded colonies on the shores of the Mediterranean capturing all unfortunate Spaniards who happened their way compelling them to work the gold and silver mines which were already opened in Spain. They sent their ships northward to England for tin and copper and into the Baltic sea for furs and ambers. Turning southward they sailed along the western coast of Africa, rounded the Cape of Good Hope probably and then floated into the Indian Ocean. Products were brought to Tyre and Sidon from the west and exchanged for goods of the east. By this extensive business of exchange these two cities became wealthy and luxuriant.

Seeing in Africa a rich soil and a splendid situation for a large city some of the citizens

built Carthage. They extended the trade of Tyre and Sidon and opened a way into Egypt and the interior of Africa bartering their wares for corn and gain; for ivory, gems and slaves.

They planted colonies in Africa and Sicily and for a time ran a heavy competition with Greece and Rome.

During this short period of success the controlling power of the sea was transferred from Asia to Africa but ^{with} the wonderful strides in the development of Greece and Rome it did not long remain so. The Greeks and Romans obtained controlling power of the sea. They founded colonies in Asia Minor, Sicily and Italy. The armies of Pyrrhus were captured and her colonies became Roman. Continuing ⁱⁿ her aggressive manner she gained possession of the greater portion of the civilized world. Taking advantage of the grounds obtained she traded between all of her colonies. She has no more enduring monuments of her industry than the military roads still existing which are found in all the countries of Europe. Though built for military purposes they were used as roads for commercial transportation. The greatest insigma of power and influence she possessed

is found in the old adage "all ways lead to Rome." But after five hundred years of sovereignty Rome fell and the dark ages followed.

From 400 to 800 A.D. commercial trading died out the only vessels on the sea being piratical. Jerusalem and the Holy Land were captured by the Turks. The crusades began and were the forerunners of a higher civilization and a far more extended commerce. Thousands of people journeyed from all parts of Europe towards the Holy Land bearing the pilgrims badge and the red cross led first by Peter the Hermit and afterwards by kings and generals. These journeys continued for two hundred years. Venice and Genoa built ships to carry the armies from France. Being shrewd merchants the Venetians drove hard bargains with them stipulating for cessions of land at the best commercial points and for beautiful compensations for their services. After the failure of each crusade they brought back the remnant of the armies and with them the products of Asia Minor and books and art treasures from Greece. These were distributed over all Italy and led to the renaissance of the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries.

The trade with the east brought wealth and power to Venice and Genoa. They founded colonies on the Black Sea in Asia Minor and on the Asiatic coast. Venice alone by her wonderful success at one time owned 3000 merchant vessels. They did not limit their vessels to the Mediterranean but opened up commerce with all parts of Europe.

The power of the Turks now increased due to the failure of the Crusades and conquered the Holy Land; places in Asia Minor and Syria; then crossing captured Constantinople and also the colonies of Venice and Genoa and their trading vessels disappeared from the Mediterranean.

In western Europe under Ferdinand and Isabella the Moors were captured who at that time possessed the greater part of Spain.

From this time a new power enters upon the stage. Spain and Portugal enter upon an era of exploration and discovery in fields unknown to the rest of Europe. During the middle ages commerce had been confined to the Mediterranean but now it is extended to the countries on the Atlantic coast resulting in

the discovery of the Cape Verde, Madiera and Canary islands. From 1470 to 1500 A.D. more discoveries were made than in any other period of the world's history.

From this time on explorations were made by all the countries of Europe such in our new field. With the new discoveries new colonies were planted. Many were the failures but with undaunted courage and a firm determination to succeed they finally established themselves and now the globe is inhabited in every spot that will raise sufficient food for man's subsistence.

After the age of discovery the route we have been following branches. Almost every nation in Europe sent out exploring expeditions which resulted ultimately, in opening up commercial relationship with all the nations of the earth. It has only been by the aid of commerce that the discoveries and colonization have been possible. Soon the colonies began an intercourse first with their mother country but later with all nations until now commerce is the bond which Providence employs to bring every people into a closer

and firm unity. Take it away and England would be seriously crippled and great would be the injury to Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Spain and in fact the larger number of the most opulent countries of Europe. It is the wealth producing factor of Europe and is indispensable to the success and prosperity of any nation.

The history of the Phoenicians came to an end after a thousand years of supremacy through the conquests of Alexander the Great. With her downfall her influence departed and no more is she known among nations. The activity, wealth and importance of Greece was due largely to a commercial energy which caused Athens and Corinth to fairly teem with wealth. But she lost her power and influence when the new route was discovered around the Cape of Good Hope thus destroying her commercial advantages.

No better illustration of the effects of commerce upon a people can be given than that of the U.S. With her development her commercial relations have extended marvellously.

She has opened up intercourse with all the countries of the world being first to enter the ports of Japan. During the last one hundred years most of her development has been made. In 1742 her total exports were \$19 000 000 and her ^{total} imports were \$29 000 000. In 1892 the total exports and imports were respectively \$1 000 000 000 and \$827 000 000 an enormous increase which is probably unparalleled, yet many things have worked against us for example the wars of 1812, the Mexican, and the Civil wars; our varying tariff policy, financial disasters and numerous other things.

The influence of commerce upon the intellectual and artistic life of a nation is almost unlimited. The demand usually is only for the flower of a nation's produce. What one nation can furnish in art, sculpturing, painting, literature, inventions &c. is exchanged for food materials, clothing or some other physical necessity.

In order that the commercial may be the most successful they must be educated. In studying the history of nations we have noticed that the richest countries and as a rule the most intelligent people were

the one who had the most commercial advantages as one has said "The commercial prosperity of Venice, Genoa, and Florence prepared the Italy of the Medicis. Danish and Dutch schools had their origin among the merchants of Amsterdam, Bruges and Antwerp. Today the French, the Anglo-Saxons in England and America, and the Germans are the most commercial, the most industrious and the richest people of the globe." "Commerce in its broadest sense is the intercourse of nation with nation and includes the interchanging of ideas" says one. It is the factor which tends to establish an intellectual equilibrium between the different nations at all times.

As a general rule the influence of foreign customs and ways has an enlightening effect. Man seems ever to strive for the best and so we find the world over the good is sifted from the bad, intelligence is taking the place of ignorance, the Christian the place of the cannibal, laws and regulations the place of selfish despotism. Inventions and improvements are being introduced success and prosperity, peace and happiness. The kindly

influence of the christian religion bless
every nation on the globe and these good
results are do in a large measure
to the beneficent influence of commerce.