

**PETER PARLEY'S  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF COMMERCE**

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Peter Parley's Illustrations of Commerce by Samuel G. Goodrich

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**SAMUEL G. GOODRICH**

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**COMMERCE.**

Samuel Griswold Gordon

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## PREFACE.

By Commerce I mean the exchange of commodities for other articles, or for some representative of value, for which other commodities can be procured.

At first, commerce consisted merely in exchanging the surplus of some particular article of produce, which an individual possessed beyond what he found necessary for his own use, for the similar surplus of some other article possessed by another individual, which kind of traffic is now generally called barter. By the introduction of metallic and paper money, the operations of commerce were much facilitated, while the increase of population rendered them of greater magnitude. Improvements in the art of navigation extended their boundaries, the advancement of science and increase of luxury multiplied the objects of trade, and the various duties and regulations established by different governments rendered the subject more complicated to individuals, but at the same time of increased importance to the state.

The advantages of commerce began to engage the attention of mankind at a very early period. About thirteen hundred years after the flood, the commerce of the Phenicians had attained to a considerable extent; they possessed manufactures, entered into commercial partnerships, made long voyages, had resident agents in foreign countries, and lent and borrowed money. The Greeks and Romans, particularly the latter, carried on an extensive trade, considering the imperfect state of navigation. The cultivation of vines in France,

Spain, and Portugal was early commenced; and from the inhabitants neglecting to cultivate corn, and turning much of their arable land into vineyards, we may presume the latter afforded considerable profit.

About the year 50, the capital of England was first described as a place famous for merchandises. In the ninth century, the Venetians carried on a very beneficial commerce with the Levant, whence they brought spices, silks, drugs and fruits from the East, in great abundance, and supplied the greater part of Europe with these commodities. The crusades contributed materially to the revival of commerce during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by introducing an acquaintance with the luxuries of the East, which multiplied the objects of trade. About this time, the commercial towns bordering on the coast of the Baltic, finding their trade much interrupted by pirates, entered into an agreement for mutual support and assistance. This union, which became very celebrated under the title of the Hanseatic League, at first consisted of only twelve towns, but finally of upwards of seventy, including all the principal commercial places of Europe, and embracing nearly all the foreign trade then carried on.

The invention of the mariner's compass, which enabled trading vessels to make much longer voyages, and led to a discovery of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, with the settlements made on the coast of Africa, in Arabia, and in India, affected very materially the commerce of the Mediterranean and the Hanse towns, and threw the principal part of the foreign trade into the hands of the Portuguese. The discovery of America opened a new and extensive field for commercial adventure, while the establishment of manufactures produced new articles of trade. The persecutions of the Spaniards drove great numbers of industrious workmen from the Netherlands into England, and other countries, who introduced several manufactures into Great Britain, and greatly improved others, which were already established.

While the different branches of Britain's manufactures were thus improving,



its colonial possessions in the East and West Indies were greatly increased, and England was enabled to rival the Dutch, not only in manufactured goods, but also in the principal articles of colonial produce. During the last century, the trade of Holland rapidly declined; and the decided naval superiority maintained by Great Britain extended and raised her commerce to a magnitude unparalleled in the history of the world. The natural advantages arising from the situation of England, and her extensive colonial possessions, particularly in the East Indies, have favored and protected her commercial intercourse; while the accumulated capital of individuals has gradually enabled them to give very considerable credit to their customers, which of late years has been of much importance in increasing the commerce of Great Britain to its present extent.

The American war produced a memorable effect on the commerce of the world. Scarcely were we freed from our allegiance to Great Britain, than our commercial enterprise and resources began to develop themselves. Our ships began to penetrate to the most distant seas, and to bring home with them the produce of every clime. It soon became a common thing for an American merchantman to make a voyage round the world, starting from some port in the United States, going round Cape Horn to the north-west coast of America, taking in furs, sailing to China, and going thence with tea, &c. to the ports of Europe.

Various causes have contributed to direct the attention of a large portion of our population to commercial pursuits. With a sea-coast two thousand miles in extent, and indented with many fine harbors, it was natural that many of the inhabitants should betake themselves to the sea for a subsistence. Excellent timber for ship-building being likewise abundant, seemed to hold out another temptation to a great portion of the people.

Near the shores of the Northern States, and on the adjacent banks of Newfoundland, are fishing stations, unsurpassed by any in the world. Fishing is

consequently a lucrative employment, in proportion to the capital invested, and constitutes the occupation of many of the inhabitants of those states. The fishermen having become accustomed to a seafaring life, and acquired the requisite skill and knowledge, soon pass into larger vessels, destined for more distant and perilous voyages.

The state of the world, for several years subsequent to the commencement of the French revolution, offered great encouragement to the commercial enterprise of the country. While almost every other power was engaged in war, the United States were neutral; their vessels navigated the ocean in safety, and were employed to carry, from port to port, the commodities of those nations which were at war. Our commercial prosperity is now established on a broad, and, I trust, an enduring basis.

## DICTIONARY OF COMMERCE.

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### AGA

**ABACA**: a kind of hemp or flax, made from the fibrous part of an Indian plantain. The white makes very fine cloth, and the gray is used for cordage and cables.

**ACACIA**: a species of Egyptian thorn-tree, from which gum Arabic is obtained.

**ACHIA**: a sort of cane, which grows in the East Indies, is pickled green, and sent to Europe in jars.

**ADAMANT**: an ancient name for the diamond. It is also sometimes used for a very hard species of iron, and for the magnet or loadstone.

**AGATE**: a gem, which takes its name from the river Achates, in Italy, on the banks of which it is found. It is chiefly composed of crystal, colored by a large quantity

### ALC

of earth. Agates are found in different parts of America. They sometimes are marked with natural representations of animals, trees, letters, &c.

**AIGRIS**: a stone, which serves instead of current coin, among the Issiniais, a nation of Africa, on the coast of Guinea, where the river Asbin runs near the Gold Coast. It is of a greenish blue color, and the natives give for it its weight in gold.

**ALABASTER**: a kind of stone resembling marble, but much softer. It is found in England, and in some parts of the United States.

**ALCANNA**: a drug used in dyeing, which comes from Egypt and other parts of the Levant.

**ALCOHOL**: a spirit, which,