

Protection of Commerce

Richard Cobden (June 3, 1804 - April 2, 1865) Businessman, politician, pamphleteer and ardent free trader. He is commonly recognized as the main opponent of the Corn Laws. In 1838 he was the Founder of the Manchester-based Anti-Corn Law League with John Bright. Cobden's efforts in opposing Corn Laws must be interpreted in the light of a broader idea about British foreign policy and power. He firmly contrasted the idea of foreign policy based upon the balance of power. His campaigns against the Corn Laws were motivated by his belief that free trade was a powerful force for peace and defence against war. Hence, Cobden also committed his effort to the promotion of peace and the reduction of naval and military armaments. After the repeal of Corn Laws in 1846, he concentrated on a campaign against British imperialism. In 1849, he brought forward a proposal in parliament in favour of international arbitration, in 1851, a motion for mutual reduction of armaments and he also animated a famous parliamentary debate against the second Opium War (1857). In 1859 he was also appointed as a plenipotentiary negotiator with France in order to establish more friendly relationships between the two countries.

The argument selected here is in line with the classics published in the foregoing issues of *Crossroads: Of the Jealousy of Trade* by David Hume (1758); *Customs Duties as a Chief Means of Establishing and Protecting the Internal Manufacturing Power* by Friedrich List (1885); a selection from *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of nations* by Adam Smith (1786), and *Observations on the Effects of the Corn Laws, and of a Rise or Fall in the Price of Corn on the Agriculture and General Wealth of the Country* (1814) by Thomas R. Malthus; *Conflict and Trade* by Solomon Polachek (1980); *Mare Liberum* by Hugo Grotius (1633).



These contributions are intended to shed light also on the modern debate over the role of international trade, international trade policies, and international economic relations within the broader range of international affairs.



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PROTECTION OF COMMERCE
Richard Cobden

VOLUME I, PART II
CHAPTER IV

PROTECTION OF COMMERCE

[...] The commerce of this country, we repeat, is, in other words, its manufactures. Our exports do not consist, as in Mexico or Brazil, of the produce of our soil and our mines; or, as in France and the United States, of a mixture of articles of agricultural and manufacturing origin: but they may be said to be wholly produced by the skill and industry of the manufacturing population of the United Kingdom¹. Upon the prosperity, then, of this interest, hangs our foreign commerce; on which depends our external rank as a maritime state; our customs duties, which are necessary to the payment of the national debt; and the supply of every foreign article of our domestic consumption—every pound of tea, sugar, coffee, or rice, and all the other commodities consumed by the entire population of these realms. In a word, our national existence is involved in the well-doing of our manufacturers. If our readers—many of whom will be of the agricultural class, but every one of

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¹We stated this familiar fact in a former pamphlet; but it is one that cannot be too frequently placed broadly before the public eye.

them nevertheless equally interested in the question—should ask, as all intelligent and reasoning minds ought to do, To what are we indebted for this commerce?—we answer, in the name of every manufacturer and merchant of the kingdom—The *cheapness* alone of our manufactures. Are we asked, How is this trade protected, and by what means can it be enlarged? The reply still is, By the *cheapness* of our manufactures. Is it inquired how this mighty industry, upon which depends the comfort and existence of the whole empire, can be torn from us?—we rejoin, Only by the *greater cheapness* of the manufactures of another country. These truths are, we presume, well known to the Government of Great Britain; at least, one member of the present cabinet is vigilantly alive to their momentous character, as we are going to show, by referring to a fact coming within our personal experience, and which bears pointedly upon the question in hand.

The Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester (of which board the author has the honour of being a member) were favoured, a short time since, with a communication from the Right Hon. C. P. Thomson, accompanied by an assortment of samples of various fabrics, which, in the diligent fulfilment of his official duties, he had caused to be procured from the several manufacturing districts of the Continent; and requesting a report as to the comparative relation which, after due examination, they might be found to bear towards the manufactures of England. Among these were patterns of Swiss Turkey-red chintz prints and of mixed cotton and linen Saxony drills—both of which commodities have been for some time sold in those quarters—superior, both in cheapness and quality, to similar articles produced in this

country: and, consequently, in reporting to the Board of Trade, the Directors of the Chamber of Commerce had the disagreeable duty of stating that, in those particular products of the loom and printing machine, we were beaten by our foreign rivals, and superseded in third or neutral markets. The causes of the advantage thus possessed over us by our competitors on the Continent, and which were pointed out to the attention of the Right Hon. President, are the heavy imposts still fettering our manufacturing energies, and the greater cost of the food of our workmen: the remedy is, obviously, a reduction of the duties on corn, oil, soap, &c. But, if, instead of naming such causes and remedies as these, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce had stated in its report that the prints of Switzerland and the drills of Saxony (*the governments of which two countries do not together own a ship of war, as we believe*) were cheaper than the like articles fabricated here, *because the British navy was not sufficiently strong*, and had advised for relief that half a million a year should be added to the navy estimates—would not a writ *de lunatico inquirendo* have justly been issued against those intelligent Directors, the writer's colleagues, without further evidence of their insanity! Yet, having seen that the only way in which we can protect our commerce is the cheapness of our manufactures, what other object can be meant, when the Government calls for an augmentation of the navy, with a view to the protection of our commerce, but some plan, however inappreciable to common minds, for reducing the expenditure of the country, and thereby relieving us from some of the burdensome imposts with which our race of competition is impeded?

But there is, in the second passage which we have just quoted from his

Majesty's speech, a part which tends to throw more light upon the whole—where it refers to the necessity of giving adequate protection to the "*extended*" commerce of the country. By which we are to infer that it is the principle of the government that the extension of our trade with foreign countries demands for its protection a corresponding augmentation of the royal navy. This, we are aware, was the policy of the last century, during the greater part of which the motto, "Ships, Colonies, and Commerce,"² was borne upon the national escutcheon, became the watchword of statesmen, and was the favourite sentiment of public writers; but this, which meant, in other words—"Men of war to conquer colonies, to yield us a monopoly of their trade," must now be dismissed, like many other equally glittering but false adages of our forefathers, and in its place we must substitute the more homely, but enduring maxim—*Cheapness*, which will command commerce; and whatever else is needful will follow in its train.

At a time when all beyond the precincts of Europe was colonial territory, and when the trade of the world was, with the exception of China, almost wholly forced into false channels, by the hand of violence, which was no sooner withdrawn than, by its own inherent law—the law of nature—it again sought its proper level course, the increase of the navy necessarily preceded and accompanied an extension of our commerce. The policy of nations, *then*, if judged by the standard which we apply to the conduct of individuals *now*—

² This is still a favourite toast at the annual meetings of the Pitt clubs, drunk by these consistent politicians who will not yield even to the inexorable reforms of trade.

and there can be no exculpation in multitudinous immorality – was, to waylay their customers, whom they first knocked down and disabled, and afterwards dragged into their stores and compelled to purchase whatever articles they chose to offer, at such prices as they chose to ask! The independence of the New World has for ever put an end to the colonial policy of the Old, and with it that system of fraud and violence which for centuries characterised the commercial intercourse of the two hemispheres. And in that portentous truth, *the Americas are free*, teeming as it does with future change, there is nothing that more nearly affects our destiny than the total revolution which it dictates to the statesmen of Great Britain, in the commercial, colonial³, and foreign policy of our Government. America is once more the theatre upon which nations are contending for mastery: it is not, however, a struggle for conquest, in which the victor will acquire territorial dominion—the fight is for commercial supremacy, and the battle will be won by the cheapest!

Whilst our trade rested upon our foreign dependencies, as was the case in the middle of the last century – whilst, in other words, force and violence were necessary to command customers for our manufactures – it was natural and consistent that almost every king's speech should allude to the importance of

³ We shall not enter upon the subject of the profit and loss of our colonies, which would require a volume. An acute writer of the day estimates the annual loss by our dependencies at something like four millions; but he loses sight altogether of the interest of the money spent in conquering them, which is twenty or thirty millions a year more! Leaving these unprofitable speculations as to the past, let us beg our readers to look at a chart of the world, and, after comparing the continent of free America with the specks of islands forming our colonial possessions, to ask himself whether, in choosing our *future* commercial course, the statesmen who presides at the helm of affairs ought to take that policy for his guide which shall conduct us to the market of the entire hemisphere, or that which prefers the minute fraction of it.

protecting the commerce of the country, by means of a powerful navy; but whilst, under the present more honest principles of trade, *cheapness* alone is necessary to command free and independent purchasers, and to protect our commerce, it must be evident that such armaments as impose the smallest possible tax upon the cost of our commodities must be the best adapted for the protection of our trade. But, besides dictating the disuse of warlike establishments, free trade (for of that beneficent doctrine we are speaking) arms its votaries by its own pacific nature, in that eternal truth—*the more any nation traffics abroad upon free and honest principles, the less it will be in danger of wars.*

If, by way of example, we refer to the present commercial intercourse between the United States and this empire, how completely does it illustrate the force of the above maxim! At no period of history were two people, aliens to each other by birth, government, laws, and institutions, united indissolubly by one common interest and mutual dependence, like these distant nations. One-third of our whole exports consists of cotton manufactures, the raw material of which is produced from the soil of the United States. More than a million of our population depend upon the due supply of this cotton wool for the labour of every succeeding day, and for the regular payment of their weekly wages. We sometimes hear objections against the free importation of corn, made on the ground that we should become dependent upon foreigners for bread; but here we have a million of people, whose power of purchasing not only bread, but meat, ay, or even potatoes, as well as clothing, is supplied from the annual growth of lands possessed by an independent nation, more

than three thousand miles off. The equilibrium⁴ of this stupendous industry is preserved by the punctual arrival from the United States of a quantity of raw cotton, averaging 15,000⁵ bales weekly, or more than 2,000 bales a day; and it depends also upon the equally constant weekly departure of more than a quarter of a million sterling worth of cotton goods, exported to foreign parts. Now, what precaution is taken by the Government of this country to guard and regulate this precious flood of traffic? How many of those costly vessels of war, which are maintained at an expense to the nation of many millions of pounds annually, do our readers suppose, are stationed at the mouths of the Mersey and Clyde, to welcome and convoy into Liverpool and Glasgow the merchant ships from New York, Charleston, or New Orleans, all bearing the inestimable freight of cotton wool, upon which our commercial and social existence depends? Not one! What portion of our standing army, costing seven millions a year, is occupied in defending this more than Pactolus—this golden stream of trade, on which floats not only the wealth, but the hopes and existence of a great community? Four invalids at the Perch Rock Battery hold the sinecure office of defending the port of Liverpool! But our exports to the United States will reach this year, perhaps, in real or declared value, more than ten millions sterling, and nearly one half of this amount goes to New York:— what portion of the Royal navy is stationed off that port to protect our

⁴ We wish those rhetorical statesmen, who talk so eloquently in favour of going to war to preserve the equilibrium of Europe, or the balance of power in Turkey, would condescend to give a thought as to its effects upon the equilibrium of our cotton manufacture.

⁵ We confine our illustrative remarks on that part which we assume to be the growth of the United States; the total of our imports and exports of cotton is, of course, more than stated here.

merchants' ships and cargoes? The appearance of a King's ship at New York is an occurrence of such rarity as to attract the especial notice of the public journals; whilst, all along the entire Atlantic coast of the United States—extending, as it does, more than 3,000 miles, to which we send a quarter of our whole yearly exports—there are stationed two⁶ British ships of only, and these two have also their stations at the West Indies.

No! this commerce, unparalleled in magnitude, between two remote nations, demands no armament as its guide or safeguard; nature itself is both. And will one rational mind recognise the possibility of these two communities putting a sudden stop to such a friendly traffic, and, contrary to every motive of self-interest, encountering each other as enemies? Such a rupture would be more calamitous to England than the sudden drying up of the river Thames; and more intolerable to America than the cessation of sunshine and rain over the entire surface of one of her maritime states?

And if such is the character of free trade (or, in other words, all trade between independent nations), that it unites, by the strongest motives of which our nature is susceptible, two remote communities, rendering the interest of the one the only true policy of the other, and making each equally anxious for the prosperity and happiness of both; and if, moreover, every addition to the amount of traffic between two independent States forges fresh fetters, which rivet more securely these amicable bonds—how can the extension of our

⁶ See the *United Service Journal* for June, 1836, for a list of the ships of war and their stations, June 1st:—North American and West Indian stations, one 74 and one 52 guns.

commerce call for an increase in our armaments, or how can a Government stand excused from the accusation of imposture, unless by the plea of ignorance, when it calls for an augmentation of the navy estimates, under the pretence of protecting our extended commerce?

But, to put this matter in another point of view, let us suppose that this mighty traffic between England and the United States, which is wholly governed by the talismanic law of "cheapness," were suddenly interrupted, in the only way in which it can be disturbed—by some other people producing cheaper hardware, woollens, pottery, etc., to whom the Americans, guided solely by that self-interest which controls alike the commerce of every nation, could sell their cotton for a greater amount of those manufactures in return—could our Royal navy, were it even augmented to tenfold its present monstrous force, protect us from the loss of our commerce? To answer this question, we need only appeal to the experience of facts, to be found at this time operating in another quarter.

At the moment when we write the British naval force stationed in the Mediterranean amounts to thirty-six vessels of war⁷, mounting altogether 1,320 guns, being rather more than a third of the death-dealing metal afloat in our King's ships. Our entire trade to all the nations bordering on this sea, and including the whole of that with Spain and France, amounts to very nearly the same as our exports to the United States; in value or importance, however, it is not equal to the latter. Now, leaving for the present the question of the profitableness of carrying on a traffic with such heavy protecting expenses

⁷ See the *United Service Journal*, June 1, 1836, for a list of the stations of the British navy.

annexed, let us proceed to ascertain whether or not this prodigious and costly navy affords an *efficient* protection to our commerce in those quarters. The reader will bear in mind our statement, that the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester had the unpleasant task of reporting to the Board of Trade that the drill manufacturers of Saxony and the calico printers of Switzerland had superseded goods of the same descriptions, made in England, in third or neutral markets. *Those markets were in the Mediterranean!* This is not all. One of those markets, from which our manufacturers were reported to have been expelled, by a decree of far more potency than was penned by the hand of violence at Berlin and Milan, and prohibited by an interdict ten times more powerful than ever sprang from the Prussian league—the interdict of *dearness*; one of those markets was *Gibraltar!!* (We promised, a few pages back, to prove that the industrious middling and working classes of this empire have no interest in the violent and unjust seizure and retention of an integral portion of the Spanish territory; and we have, in this simple fact, redeemed our pledge.) We give it to the reflecting portion of our readers, as a truth authenticated by the very best authority, and worthy of deep attention from the economist, the statesman, and the advocate of peace and of a moral ascendancy over physical force—that the artisans of Switzerland and of Saxony have achieved a victory over the manufacturers of England, upon her own fortress—the free port of Gibraltar! We kiss the rod—we dote upon this fact, which teaches, through us, a lesson to mankind, of the inefficacy of brute violence in the trading concerns of the world. Let us pause, then, to recapitulate our facts. On the one hand, behold a commerce with America, amounting to a quarter of the whole trade

of the kingdom—upon which depends, from week to week, the subsistence of a million of people, and whereon rests our very existence as a commercial empire—conducted regularly, day by day, without the aid or intervention of ships of war to guide or coerce it; on the other, an armament, avowedly to protect our commerce, of 1,320 cannon, unable to guard our manufactures against the successful cheapness of the poorest, the weakest, and humblest community of the Continent—a community destitute of fleets, and without a standing army. The inference is plain—we have succeeded in establishing our premises; for, having proved that the (physically speaking) impregnable fortress of Gibraltar, with its triple lines of batteries, aided by thirty-six vessels of war, and altogether combining a greater quantity of artillery than was put in requisition to gain the victory of Waterloo, Trafalgar, or the Nile, surrenders our commerce into the hands of the Swiss and Saxons, unable to protect us against the cheaper commodities of those countries—we need not go further to show, since these two countries without navies are our witnesses of the facts, that armed fleets, armies, and fortresses, are not essential to the extension of commerce, and that they do not possess the power of protecting it against the *cheapness* of rivals. These may appear trite and familiar truths to our intelligent readers; our justification may be found, if needed, in the fact, that the Government has demanded and obtained an addition to our navy estimates, this session of Parliament, amounting to nearly half a million sterling per annum, under the pretence of *protecting* our commerce; and we do not recollect that one of our representatives rose from his seat to tell the minister, as we now tell him, that *his* is that kind of *protection* which the eagle affords to the

lamb – covering it to devour it.

It will be seen that all which has been stated bears indirectly, but conclusively, upon the question of Russia and Turkey, and affords an unanswerable argument against going to war to defend our commerce by means of naval armaments; since it is plain, from the example of Gibraltar, that, even were Constantinople in our own power, its commerce could be retained only by our selling cheaper than other nations; whilst, supposing it to be in the possession of Russia or any other people, the cheapness of our commodities will eventually command that market, in the same manner as the cheap drills and prints of Saxony and Switzerland supplant our goods, in spite of the batteries and fleets which defend our Spanish fortress.

Having thus shown that cheapness, and not the cannon or the sword, is the weapon through which alone we possess and can hope to defend or extend our commerce – having proved, also, that an increase of trade, so far from demanding an augmentation of warlike armaments, furnishes an increased safeguard against the chances of war – is it not clear that, to diminish the taxes and duties which tend to enhance the cost of our manufactures, by a reduction of our navy and army, is the obvious policy of a ministry which understands and desires to promote the true interests of this commercial nation? Were our army and navy reduced to one-half of their present forces, and the amount saved applied to the abolition of the duties upon cotton, wool, glass, paper, oil, soap, drugs, and the thousand other ingredients of our manufactures, such a step would do more towards protecting and extending the commerce of Great

Britain than an augmentation of the naval armaments to fifty times their present strength, even supposing such an increase could be effected with no addition to the national burdens.

[...] We recur to the subject of protecting our commerce by armed ships; and it becomes necessary next to examine, whether, even supposing our naval force could defend our trade against the attacks of rivals (which we have conclusively proved it cannot), the cost of its protection does not, in some cases, more than absorb the gain of such traffic. The real or declared value of all the British manufactures and other produce exported to the Mediterranean, including the coast of Africa and the Black Sea, will this year amount to about £9,500,000. Under the groundless plea of protecting this commerce, we find, from the *United Service Journal* of June 1st, that a naval armament, mounting more than 1,300 guns, being upwards of a third of the national force, is stationed within the Straits of Gibraltar. Taking the annual cost of the entire British navy at five millions, if we apportion a third part of this amount, and add the whole cost of the fortifications and garrisons of the Mediterranean, with their contingents at the war office, ordnance, etc., we shall be quite safe and within the mark, in estimating that our yearly expenditure in guarding the commerce of this sea, amounts to upwards of three millions sterling, or one-third of our exports to those quarters. Now, what kind of a business would a wholesale dealer or merchant pronounce it, were his traveller's expenses, for escort alone, to come to 6s. 8d. in the pound on the amount of his sales! Yet this is precisely the unprofitable character of our yearly trade to the Mediterranean.

Most people approach the investigation of a nation's affairs with the impression that they do not come under the same laws of common sense and homely wisdom by which private concerns are governed – than which nothing can be more erroneous. America, which carries on a traffic one-half as extensive as Great Britain, with only a sixth⁸ of our navy expenses, and with no charge for maintaining colonies or garrisons, is every year realising a profit to her people beyond that of her extravagant rival, in proportion to her more economical establishments; just exactly in the same way that the merchant or shopkeeper who conducts his business at a less cost for rent, clerks, etc., will, at each stock-taking, find his balance-sheet more favourable than that of his less frugal competitor. And the result will be in the one case as in the other –

⁸ The following is the American navy in commission, February 27, 1836: – One ship of the line, four frigates, eleven sloops, six small vessels; and this after a threatened rupture with France, when every arrival from Europe might have brought a declaration of war! Compare this statement with the fact, that the British Government, with a force, at the same time, more than six-fold that of the United States, demanded an increase of more than the entire strength of the American navy, and with the same breath avowed the assurance of permanent peace; and let it be remembered, too, that the House of Commons voted this augmentation, under the pretence of protecting our commerce! A few plain maxims may be serviceable to those who may in future have occasion to allude to the subject of commerce, in king's speeches, or other state papers. To make laws for the regulation of trade, is as wise as it would be to legislate about water finding a level, or matter exercising its centripetal force.

So far from large armaments being necessary to secure a regularity of supply and demand, the most obscure province on the west coast of America, and the smallest island in the South Pacific, are, in proportion to their wants, as duly visited by buyers and sellers as the metropolis of England itself.

The only naval force required in a time of peace for the protection of commerce, is just such a number of frigates and small vessels as shall form an efficient sea police.

If government desires to serve the interests of our commerce, it has but one way. War, conquest, and standing armaments cannot aid, but only oppress trade; diplomacy will never assist it – commercial treaties can only embarrass it. *The only mode by which the Government can protect and extend our commerce, is by retrenchment, and a reduction of the duties and taxes upon the ingredients of our manufactures and the food of our artisans.*

that the cheaper management will produce cheaper commodities; which, in the event, will give a victory, in every market, to the more prudent trader.

But if, instead of the Mediterranean generally, we apply this test to an individual nation situated on that sea, we shall be able to illustrate the matter more plainly. In the same work from which we have before quoted, we find it stated that there are (June 1st) thirteen British ships of war lying at Lisbon, carrying 372 guns; *a force about equal to the whole American navy employed in protecting the interests of that commercial people all over the world!* That part of our annual navy estimates which goes to support this amount of guns, with contingent expenses fairly proportioned, will reach about £700,000. Turning to M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary (article, Oporto), we find that the declared value of exports of British manufactures and produce to the entire kingdom of Portugal, reached in 1831 (the latest year we have at this moment access to), £975,991. Here then we find, even allowing for increase, the escort costing nearly as much as the amount sold. In a word, Portugal is, at this moment, *paying* us at the rate of £500,000 a year clear and dead loss! Our commerce with that country, on this 1st June, was precisely of the same ruinous character to the British nation as it would be in the case of an individual trader who turned over twenty thousand a year, and whose expenses in clerks, watchmen, rents, etc., were £15,000. If anything could add to the folly of such conduct—conduct which, if proved against an individual brought before an insolvent debtors' tribunal would be enough to consign him to prison—it is, to recollect that no part of such a nautical force can possibly be of the slightest service to our trade

with Portugal, which is wholly independent of such coercion. Even our foreign secretary—a functionary who, during the last hundred and fifty years, has travelled abroad for this commercial empire with no other result to the national ledger but eight hundred millions of bad debts—has, we are happy to see, discovered this truth; for, on being questioned by Mr. Robinson in the House,⁹ as to a recent *grateful* augmentation of duties upon British goods, amounting to 14 per cent., by the Government of Lisbon, our present foreign secretary, Lord Palmerston, avowed that the Portuguese were free to put whatever restraints they chose upon our trade with their country; and he merely threatened, if the tariff was not satisfactory, that he would attack them—how do our readers suppose?—with the thunder of our ships in the Tagus?—with soldiers and sailors?—with grape, musketry, shot, shell, and rocket?—all of which we provide for the protection of our commerce? No—with *retaliatory duties!*

[...] We had intended and were prepared to give a summary of the wars, their causes and *commercial* consequences, in which Great Britain has been during the last century and a half from time to time engaged; but we are admonished that our limited space will not allow us to follow out this design. It must suffice to offer as the moral of the subject, that although the conflicts in which this country has during the last 150 years involved itself have, as Sir Henry Parnell¹⁰ has justly remarked, in almost every instance been undertaken in

⁹ House of Commons' Report, June 6.

¹⁰ "Financial Reform."

behalf of our commerce, yet we hesitate not to declare that there is no instance recorded in which a favourable tariff or a beneficial commercial treaty has been extorted from an unwilling enemy at the point of the sword. On the contrary, every restriction that embarrasses the trade of the whole world, all existing commercial jealousies between nations, the debts that oppress the countries of Europe, the incalculable waste owing to the misdirected labour and capital of communities, these and a thousand other evils that are now actively thwarting and oppressing commerce are all the consequences of wars. How shall a profession which withdraws from productive industry the ablest of the human race, and teaches them systematically the best modes of destroying mankind, which awards honours only in proportion to the number of victims offered at its sanguinary altar, which overturns cities, ravages farms and vineyards, uproots forests, burns the ripened harvest, which, in a word, exists but in the absence of law, order, and security—how can such a profession be favourable to commerce, which increases only with the increase of human life, whose parent is agriculture, and which perishes or flies at the approach of lawless rapine? Besides, they who propose to influence by force the traffic of the world, forget that affairs of trade, like matters of conscience, change their very nature if touched by the hand of violence; for as faith, if forced, would no longer be religion, but hypocrisy, so commerce becomes robbery if coerced by warlike armaments¹¹. If, then, war has in past times in no instance served the just interests of commerce, whilst it has been the sole cause

¹¹ "To me it seems that neither the obtaining nor the retaining of any trade, however valuable, is an object for which men may justly spill each other's blood; that the true and sure means of

of all its embarrassments; if for the future, when trade and manufactures are brought under the empire of "cheapness," it can still less protect, whilst its cost will yet more heavily oppress it; and having seen that if war could confer a golden harvest of gain upon us instead of this unmixed catalogue of evils it would still be not profit, but plunder; having demonstrated these truths, surely we may hope to be spared a repetition of the mockery offered to this commercial empire at the hands of its government and legislature in the proposal to protect our commerce *by an increase of the Royal navy!* On behalf of the trading world an indissoluble alliance is proclaimed with the cause of peace, and if the unnatural union be again attempted of that daughter of Peace, Commerce, whose path has ever been strewed with the choicest gifts of religion, civilisation, and the arts, with the demon of carnage, War, loaded with the maledictions of widows and orphans, reeking with the blood of thousands of millions of victims¹², with feet fresh from the smoking ruins of cities, whose ears delight in the groans of the dying, and whose eyes love to gloat upon the dead, if such an unholy union be hereafter proposed, as the humblest of the votaries of that commerce which is destined to regenerate and unite the whole world, we will forbid the banns.

extending and securing commerce is the goodness and cheapness of commodities; and that the profit of no trade can ever be equal to the expense of compelling it and of holding it by fleets and armies." – *Franklin's letter to Lord Howe, quoted in Hughes' History of England*, vol. xv., p. 254.
¹¹ Burke, in his first production – *A Vindication of Natural Society* – sums up his estimate of the loss of human life, by all the wars of past ages, at seventy times the population of the globe. It is not a little lamentable to reflect that this great genius, among other *inconsequential* acts of his life, afterwards contributed more than any other individual to fan the flame of the French revolutionary wars, in which several millions more were added to his dismal summary of the victims of "glory." (?)