A TREATISE
OF COMMERCE,
WHERIN ARE SHEWED THE COMMODIES
ARISING BY A WELL ORDERED, AND RULED TRADE.
Such as that of the Societie of Merchantes Adventurers is proved to bee, written principallie for the better information of them who doubt of the Necessaries of the said Societie in the State of the Reame of England.

BY JOHN WHITEL, Secre.
late to the said Societie.

MIDDLEBURCH,
By Richard Schilders, Printer to the States of Zeland.
1601.
TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE SIR ROBERT CECILL KNIGHT, PRIN.cepall Secretarie to her Maiestie.

HOSE which heretofore (Right Honorable) haue written of anie matter, and haue opinion, that the publishinge thereof might doe good unto othe-
thers, haue used to Dedicate their Labours to some one, or other, under whose countenance, and protection the same might go forth, and bee the better lyked, and receiv-ved of all men: Whiche is the cause that I haue made bolde to inscribe this TREATISE.

A
such as it is, vnto your Honour, vpon hope
of fauourable allowance, and Patronage,
which I instanly craue, and entreat, and
with all, that in the reading thereof, your
Honour would vouchsafte to remember,
that it concerneth those men, and that olde
and auncientlie renoumpned Companie of
Merchauntes Adventurers,
which was so well esteemed of, and highlie
fauoured by your late right Honorable Fa-
ther, of woorchie memorie, vnto whome
as God hath appointed your Honour to be
a Successour in manie excellent thinges of
this life, whether we rearde the Honou-
table Places, whereto you are called in
the Gouvernement of the State, or the ver-
tues, and qualities fitt for so weightie a cal-
linge, wherewith you are endewed, So it
may please your Honour to take vnto you
this Succession also, to witte, the dweefulfull
Obersvancie, and Prompitude, which the
said Companie alwayes fethered towards
your saide right Honourable Fathers seruice,
and
and which they also stande readie, and de-
rour to present, & performe vnto your Ho-
nour to their best power, and abilitie.
I am not ignorant alfo, that it is the man-
ner of Writers, to fill vp the greatest parte of
their Praefaces with the praifes, and comen-
dations of those, to whome they Dedicate
their Trauaille, and furelie this Reward see-
meth to bee dew vnto true Vertue, that the
Memorie thereof I should bee consecrated
to Posteritie, which can not be performed
by anie Monument better, then by Bookes:
And albeit, without all Glosinge, or coun-
terfeyting, I haue heere in verie deed a large
fielde of your Honours praeyes offered vnto
me, yet because my simplicitie not one-
lie abhorreth all Adulation, but with all all
kine of Fawninge, or flatteringe speche,
and that your Honours singulare Modestie,
is wonte, not to abide anie thing leffe, then
euen the modestest commendations, I will
leff passe the same, and come vnto the han-
dlinge of the ensuing Treatise, which with
my
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myselfe I humbly recommende vnto your Honours good sauour, and so beseeche the Almightye to bleffe, and keepe your Honor. Middlesbrough the vii of June 1601.

Your Honors with his service at commandment,

John Wheeler.

A Treatise of Commerce, wherein are insered the commodities arising by a well ordered and ruled Trade, such as that of the Societie of MERCHANTS ADVENTURERS is prooved to bee. Written principallie for the better information of those who doubt of the Necessitie of the said Societie in the state of the Realme of England. By John Wheeler, Secretary to the said Societie.

Vita Civilius in Societate eil, Societas in Imperii, &
Commercio.

Commercio Cendes mare, montibus, discrette miscent-
atur, ut quidvis nascitur, opus omnes afficit.

Here betwoo points about the which the Royal office, and administration of a Prince, is wholly employed, to wit, about the Gouernement of the Persons of men, next of Things con-
venient and fit for the maintenaunce of Humane societie: wherein principally the civile life consists, and hath her being: And therefore the Prince that loveth the Policie, and ruleth by
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fage and good councell, isto constitute and appoint
certaine Lawes, and ordinarie Rules, both in the one
and the other of the abouesaid pointes, and especial-
lie in the first, as the chiefest, which is coveniante and
occupied about the institutio of the persons of men
in Pietie, civile conversation in maners, and faction
of life, and specially in the mutual dewtie of Equity, and
Charite one towards another: of the which my
purpose is not to intreat, but somewhat of that other
point, namely the government of Things conveni-
ient, and fit for the maintenance of Humane So-
ciety: whereunto mens acions and affections are
chiefest directed, and whereabout they beflow and
employ not onely the quickenes and industrie of
their spirits, but also the labour and traveile of their
handes, and sides: that so they may drawe from
thence either commoditie or pleasure, or at leaftwise
thereby supplie, helpe, and furnish their several wants,
and necessities: From hence, as from a root or foun-
taine first proceedeth the effecte of Merchandise, and
then consequentlie in a rowe, so manie, diversie, and
fondrie Artes, as we see in the worlde. At which it
should seeme that man beginneth the train, or course
of his life, and therein first of all discouereth not on-
lie the dexterity and sharpnes of his wit, but with-
all that naughtines & corruption which is naturallie
in him: for there is nothing in the world so ordinar-
iue, and naturalle vno men, as to contradic, trauk, mer-
chandise, and trafique one with another, so that it
is almost vnpowable for thre persons to converte
together two hours, but they wil fall into talle of one
bargaine or another, chopping, changyng, or some
other kinde of contract. Children, affoone as ever
their tongues are at libertie, doe feafon their spotes
with some merchandize, or other, and what they goe
to schoole, nothing is so common among them, as to
chaunge, and rechaunge, buye and sell of that, which
they bring from home with them: the Prince with
his subjectes, the Master with his servaunts, one frend
and acquaintance with another, the Captaine with
his foudliers, the Husband with his wife, Women
with, and among them felles, and in a worlde, all the
world choppee and chaungeth, runneth and raueth
after Martes, Markettes, and Marchandising, so that
all things come into Commerce, and passe into Tra-
sicque (in a maner) in all times, and in all places: not
onyly that, which Nature bringeth forth, as the
fruits of the earth, the beastes, and living creatures
with their spoiles, skines, and coale, the metalles, mi-
neralles, & such like things, but further alfo, this man
maketh merchandise of the workes of his owne
handes, this man of another mans labour, one felleth
woordes, another maketh traffickinge of the skins, and
blood of other men, yet there are some foold so sub-
till and cunning merchants, that they perivade and
induce men to suffer them selves to bee bought and
solde, and we have seenne in our time enow, and too
manie, whiche haue made marchandize of mens
soyles: to conclude, all that a man worketh with his
hand, or discouereth in his spiritt, is nothing else but

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marchandise, and a trial to put in pracie the Con-
tactes, which the Legitimes men skillful in the laws
knew not to name otherwise this thus: Deo de Far-
io et fata: the which wordes in effect comprehend
in them all traffiqus, or Traffiques whatsoever,
and are none other thing but meer matter of mar-
chandise, and Commerce. Now albeit this affection
be in all persons generally both high and low, yet
there are of the notablest, and principal Traff-
quers which are ashamed, and thinke itorne to bee
called Marchantes, whereas in deede Marchandise
which is vied by way of proper vacatiō, being right-
lie considered of, is not to be despised, or accom-
panied back by men of judgement, but to the con-
trarie, by manie reasons and examples it is to be prooved,
that the estate is honorable, & may bee exercised not
only of the third estate (as we terme them)
but also by the Nobles, and chiefest men of this
Realm, with commendable proffite, and without a
nemic derogation to their Nobilities, high Degrees,
and conditions: With what great good to their States,
honors, & enriching of themselves and their Coun-
tries, the Venetians, Florentines, Genoese, and our
neighbours the Hollanders, have vied this trade of life, who
kneweth not? or having scene the beautie, strength,
opulencie, and popoulouenes of the abovesaid Cit-
ties, and Provinces wondrefh not thereat? Was not
this the first steppe, and entrie of the Kings of Por-
tagall into the kingdomes, and Riches of the East? Solon,
in his youth, gave him selfe to the feat of Mer-
chandise, and in his time faith Plutarch (bringing His-
iodor for his Author) there was none estate of life
reprochfull, neither Art, or occupation, that did put
difference betweene men, but rather which is more,
Commercio was accomphed an honourable thing,
as that whiche miniied the means to haunt, and
traffique with Barbarous Nations, to procure the
friendship of Princes, and to gaigne experience in
many matters: in so much (layeth he) that there
have been Merchants, which were founders of great
Cities, as he was that founded Marselles in France:
The wife Thales Miletino did also exercife Man-
chandise, likewise Hippocrates and Plato defrayed the chal-
ges of a voyage, which hee made in Egypt, with the
monie which hee got there by selling of oyle: So that
it appeareth, that not only a Prince may bee this
kinde of men, I meane Merchantes, to the great be-
enie, and good of his state, either for foraigne in-
telligence or exploration, or for the opening of an
entrie and passage into unknowen and farre distant
parts, or for the furnishing of monie, and other pro-
visions in time of warres, and dearch, or lastly, for the
service and honor of the Prince, and Countrey abroad
at all times requisite, and expedient, but also this
kinde of life may be exercized and vied with com-
mandation, and without losse of one jot of honor in
those, who are honorable, or of eminent degree,
as aforefaid: Whereunto I adde thisth further, that
without Merchandise, no eafe or commodious li-
ving continueth long in anie state, or common
wealth, no not loyalty, or equitie it'se, or upright dealing. Therefore herein also, in the former point, good order and rule is to be set, where it is wanting, or where it is already established, there it ought to be preserved: for the maintenance of so necessarie, and beneficail an estate in the common wealth, by constituting meet and well proportioned ordinances over the same, & over these things, which are there upon depending, between the Marchantes, and these things, which are merchandized, or handled likewise with covenable, and well appropriated Magistrates, and overseers for the maintenance, and execution of these ordinances. For it is very certain and true, that fine impostos, demesne ville, etc. Croissants, nee Gene, &e Societia, nee humanae universitatis genus flaves, nee rerum natura omnis, nee Mundus pessimi, etc.

The peaceable, polite, and riche Prince King Henry the seventh, well marking the truth thereof, and perceiving that as in former times, so in his, many disturbances, grievances and damages had befallen ro, and among the English Marchantes his subiectes, trading into the Iowe Countries, ob defelium boni Regimini, tooke order for the same, as well by confirment the auncient Charters of his Predecessours, Kings of England vnto the Societe of M. M. Adventurers, as also by adding thervnto newe, whereby he so strengthened, and enlarged the authority, and Priviledges of the said Fellowship, that ever since the same hath flourished in great prosperitie, and wealth, and out of it (as out of a plentifull

Nouerentie) have sprung and proceeded almost all the principal Merchants of this Realm, at least such Companies as have arisen sinc, have for the most part, fetched their light, patterne, and forme of policie and trade from the said Societe to the inestimable good and benefite of this Realm, our native Country: so that to change this course were to returne to the olde confusion, and disorder, and widthall to bereave the lande of so necessarie and serviceable an estate, as Merchandysie is.

Whereover is commendable, or is paid of the best founded Companies, or Merchantes in generall, makes also for the Compaine of Merchantes Adventurers speciallie: howbeit these things are particularlie for our purpose to be considerd in this Compaine: The first Institution: The Auncient estayment of it hath had: The place and governement of it, and such benefites, as grown to the Realme by the maintenance of it.

Of the first Institution of the Fellowshipe or Compaine of Merchantes Adventurers, and the causes thereof.

ARCHES, a prudent Counsellour, and a good husband, in deed, faith: Quius opus est Patres familias venduntur, eos non enramant. And who knoweth not, that we have no final need of manie things, whereof fo-