

TREATISE ON POLITICAL ECONOMY

Antoine Montchretien

(1615)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Opening Dedication</i>	<i>iv</i>
Book One: Manufacturing	1
Part One: (The Meaning of Political Economy)	2
Part Two: (The Anatomy of A State)	14
Part Three: (The Art of Arts)	22
Part Four: (The Art of Clothing)	30
Part Five: (On Various Other Arts)	45
Part Six: (On Employment)	52
Part Seven: (Conclusion)	60

OPENING DEDICATION

(“To the King and to the Queen”)

Your Most Christian Majesties,

This discourse, which draws its quality more from truth than artifice and which, compared with its usefulness, will prove, I am sure, shorter than it seems, is dedicated to you collectively, inasmuch as it belongs equally to you all. For, on the one hand, it is not permissible for man to separate what God, nature, and affection have so closely joined. And, on the other hand, it seems necessary that, as you share in the same concerns on the same occasions, that you should also be given the same advice concerning the welfare of your subjects and the repose of your sacred persons, since this is how you graciously receive it from the hands of those who devote themselves to your glory and to the advancement of their country, all that God has placed in them in terms of action, thought and speech. For my part, it is with the most devout reverence that I approach Your Majesties, with the most sincere gratitude that command belongs to you and obedience to us, that your sole authority supremely encompasses the power of all magistrates, both to command and to govern, and that it is not for us to lay hands on the ark to set it right.

In truth, it is easy for us to recognise disorder, for we see and feel it; but it is neither permissible nor possible for us to remedy it. We must be allowed to desire the best form of government, for all our happiness depends on it, but we are not capable of conceiving it as it should be. So many minds will never have a single, consistent opinion, which is essential in this matter. If everyone were free to choose what they thought best, not only would confusion ensue, but we would also obtain the least of what we desire most. Polykleitos, the renowned sculptor, made two statues at the same time; one according to the various fantasies of the people, the other according to the rules of his art. For the first, he constantly transposed and changed something at the suggestion and advice of everyone; but he brought the other to the point of perfection by following his own judgement. Finally, when he exhibited them to the public, one was admired by everyone, but the other was only a source of ridicule and mockery. ‘The one you criticise so much,’ he said, ‘is yours, and the one you praise so much is mine.’ If the nature of the disorders in which we now live required you to make

two different reforms, one according to the appetite of the common people, and the other according to the true maxims of state and police, which the practice of affairs teaches you, I have no doubt that the same would happen.

Leaving aside the imaginations of the vulgar, work only on your masterpiece, and on yourself. For everything that does not stem from uniform counsel is fraught with turbulence in its action and deformity in its end. What remains for us to do, with your permission, is to contribute the best we have, both in knowledge and experience, to the enrichment of your reason, so that, applied with a single discourse and the same judgement to the construction of the work, the whole may succeed to the immortal glory of Your Majesties, to the good of your subjects in general and of each one in particular.

We hope that Your Majesties will demonstrate their political skill and competence in this new restoration of order and affairs, not only by heeding the sound and salutary advice they receive daily from their subjects and most loyal servants, but also by supplementing all their omissions with their own initiative and particular knowledge. The Roman Senate, as Livy recounts, ordered without being asked that soldiers, who had previously received no pay, should be maintained at public expense; when the people heard this, ran to the palace to thank them, and, kissing the hands of the senators, humbly told them that they were rightly their fathers for granting them what they had never thought of, what their tribunes had never asked of them. The gratitude and thanks of the provinces of this kingdom will be no less towards you when they recognise that you also apply your royal intellect to the pursuit of the public good, beyond which, to tell the truth, all enjoyment of comfort should be but an addition. Good is all the more welcome when it is least expected. Our wishes and desires are no measure of what you can do for us; but your goodwill, which we believe to be infinite towards your people and, consequently, the future effects thereof, incomprehensible.

This is what first prompted me to undertake this work, and then to offer it at the feet of Your Majesties, with the most humble request that you accept it as a token of my affection for your service and for the good of my country. If you deign to take the trouble to read it, an honour I promised myself when writing it, you will notice how France today is like that great plane tree, to which its compatriot Themistocles refers, where everyone rushes for shelter and then, as

they leave, breaks off and carries away a branch; that, although it is fertile and abundant in all kinds of goods and conveniences more than any other country on earth, life there is nevertheless made as difficult for many as if they lived in the hot arenas of Africa or in the bitter ice of Scythia; that it was once watered by springs that are open and uncovered, but that, having been neglected for some time, it is no wonder that the streams have dried up; that the men who are considered the happiest live there in noble poverty; that the others, who are born into hardship and labour, if Your Majesties do not provide for them, leave only rich in poverty; although, moreover, the morals of all are equally corrupted by the admiration of riches, and the most enormous vice finds a wife there, while virtue can hardly find a husband.

May Your Majesties, moreover, not neglect to read it, if it pleases them, for the smallness of the matters that seem to be dealt with therein. Truly, the principles I propose are not the most obvious or magnificent, but I can assure you that if you give them the means to progress, they will soon increase and become very great in the end. Those trees of admirable size, where birds build their nests and which provide shade for passers-by and flocks, are produced from very small seeds. In the same way, a little water nourishes grass, fruit and flowers. Thus, the light and gentle rains that fall in summer, after a great heat, give a loving refreshment to the parched earth, from which the fertile vapours that water and fertilise it are generated anew. But just as the sun's strength and heat are needed to draw them upwards, so too must your power and affection be directed towards your people in order to revive in them this action, which languishes as if stifled in the absence of such assistance; so that, living in a happy abundance of all things, they may be obliged to bless your sceptre and to join all their wishes universally to those you make every day for the long duration of your life in perfect health and for the growth of this empire in power and glory.

Your most humble, most obedient servant, and most faithful subject, Your Most Christian Majesties, Ant. de Montchretien.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

BOOK ONE
MANUFACTURING

(“The Usefulness of Mechanical Arts and Manufacturing”)

PART ONE

(THE MEANING OF POLITICAL ECONOMY)

Those who are called to govern the States must have glory, growth and enrichment as their main goal. What greater and more honourable purpose can Your peaceful Majesties apply themselves to; what more worthy and useful task can the people they admit to the administration of their affairs undertake, than to watch over and work for the order, the employment and accommodation of your peoples? To repair what time may have worsened by renewing and refreshing the good and ancient customs of this kingdom, to supplement and adjust what experience and reason of the times and affairs show to be useful and necessary.

By all the laws that govern this world, it is impossible for the old Estates to remain forever in the same state. Many vicious tendencies accumulate within them, which impede or divert their legitimate actions. But those who cannot restore them to good health must at least maintain them through good governance... Your State is composed of three principal members: (i) the ecclesiastical, (ii) the noble and (iii) the popular. As for the judiciary, I consider it to be the cement and mortar that binds the other three together.

This discourse that I present to Your Majesties does not touch upon it, nor upon the first two. These parts are delicate and require your own hand. It therefore concerns particularly the last, the most negligible in appearance, but in fact very considerable. For it is their first foundation, as in the disposition of the world the earth serves as a pedestal and centre for the other three elements. We can therefore say that without this body, which forms the bulk of the State, the rest could not survive for long without falling back into the mixture and confusion of its original chaos.

This third order is composed of three types of men: (i) labourers, (ii) artisans and (iii) merchants. They stick together and easily incorporate, as they symbolise the same quality and similarity of life, morals and temperaments, actions and conditions. Imagine that they are the fingers of the same hand, which the spirit of public necessity joins together in different ways, as if with a

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

single spring; the three channels of common utility, which carry and pour water into the great squares of your cities, where all other men come to drink: the public fountain keepers must take great care to maintain them, lest this humour be lost underground through some leak, or be diverted elsewhere.

Among these three kinds of men are practised the effective arts, commonly called mechanical, having more regard to the hands that exercise them than to their own dignity. We note in mechanics the representations and images of the same prudence that shines in the liberal arts, in proportion to their greater or lesser merit. These are streams flowing from the same source and spreading incessantly through the necessities of human life.

These two great luminaries of philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, and their most famous disciples who followed them, who deliberately or incidentally dealt with the subject of policing, were well aware that common poverty, requiring common assistance, led almost from the outset to the gathering and association of men, from which arose the communion of cities and the habitation of towns. Thus Plato makes some men fit to command and others to obey, some men loving literature, and others agriculture, trade, the liberal arts, and mechanical measures; distinguishing them all according to the various metals, which he adapts to the natural properties of each, so that those who are more inclined towards gold are more inclined towards the most exquisite kind of life, those who are more inclined towards iron are more capable of hard and arduous trades; and so on for the others.

For we who are educated in the best schools, where we learn from the master and governor of all things that all things here below and above are governed by the eternal wisdom of God, and that we reduce everything to this point as the circumference to the centre, we are resolved that it is by no means by chance that we come to our profession, but that by a superior providence each one receives his lot in this public work of life, to which we are without exception born and destined, one and the same spirit working all things in all.

Returning to the ancients, even though they were so diligent in writing to us about laws, precepts and maxims concerning political government, we should not be surprised if, in such ignorance, they omitted or touched upon, as if by chance, in passing, what concerns the regulation of this point; nor should we be surprised if we find neither near nor far in their books any ordinances or means

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

suitable for educating and training a certain number of men in the arts and crafts according to the capacity, disposition, usefulness and necessity of each country, even though the most essential part of a well-regulated state undoubtedly consists in electing and appropriately appointing men suitable for common and particular services, no more and no less than for the good government and conduct of a ship, it is necessary to choose the right captains and pilots, and then to arrange the sailors and shipmates well for the manoeuvre.

Who would not blame careless mechanics for not having the tools appropriate to their trade, or who, having them, would be ignorant of their names and even more so of their uses? And what reproach falls upon the politician, acting in his work not by inanimate means, but by instruments having feeling, movement and reason, if he does not judiciously know to what they can and must be applied, in order to bring forth that great masterpiece of salvation and public utility which must be the supreme law of all his imaginations and actions?

It is true that, in order to excuse these great men for such negligence, one might say that it did not stem from ignorance or lack of curiosity about such an important matter, but rather from a certain preconceived opinion they had that common necessity, which is itself considered the origin of the arts, acting and regulating itself in this matter, would suffice to remedy it; that, as evidence, the matter speaks for itself to those who wish to listen and take heed, as in all assemblies of civilised peoples there is a sufficient number of skilled people to perform public and private services, and all this without any political foresight.

Let us accept this reason out of reverence for antiquity, which we cannot honour too much. But let us also be allowed to assert this truth: that the main point of the government of the State lies in the regulation of the various occupations of its people, and that in human society the order that arises from this is like the principle of its life; that, if this foundation is not well established, the edifice always shakes at the slightest wind and threatens ruin; in short, that without this certain conduct and skill on the part of men, a republic remains far below the perfection and greatness it could achieve.

Let us consider here that, on the one hand, everything we see is, by its very impermanence so visible to our eyes, naturally subject to change and consequently to decay, corruption and ruin; that, moreover, if we look beyond

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

the nature of the elements of which we are composed, we see that the poverty that afflicts us comes from our imperfection, our imperfection from our vice, and from our vice the pain that compels us to live in mental and physical labour.

This is like the imbecility found among men, for not one is capable of providing for all his needs, I will not say for many, but even for himself, and from this has come this multiplicity of arts, from which comes not mere ornamentation, but the wealth and ordinary exercise of those families which we have said make up the third member of the State, the demon of industry working diversely in them every day, and through their hands conducting useful things, acquiring wisdom, pleasantness, attractiveness, magnificence, and grandeur. Nature, wise worker and perfect artisan of all that is vegetable, sensitive and reasonable in the world, considering how necessary this industry was for the maintenance of the things she gives us to enjoy and use, conferred it upon man as a heavenly gift.

Let us take a general look at everything that can provide us with food and clothing, maintain our health and our homes, the characteristics of this virtue are so clearly imprinted upon them that, without blindness as obvious as it is voluntary, we cannot doubt that it is an inseparable part of our being, indeed the fundamental basis that nature has chosen to sustain the admirable architecture of its small world. Let us then consider the liberal and mechanical arts, where its light shines most brightly in so many rays; we will find them so necessary, useful and pleasant that the one we look at most will seem the most preferable; and then, descending as if by degrees from one to the other, we will judge that it would be difficult to do without any of them and that all together they form this marvellous chain of gold with several intertwined links, which moves and attracts to itself the things of this world, as well as that which Homer placed in the hands of his Jupiter.

Private affairs determine public affairs. The household comes before the city; the city before the province; the province before the kingdom. Thus, the art of politics depends indirectly on economics; and, as it owes much to it in terms of conformity, it must likewise borrow from it. For good domestic government, properly understood, is a model and pattern for public government, whether one considers right command or faithful obedience, the principal bond between the two. Good political administration is the universal health of the whole body of the State, and consequently the complete disposition of each individual member.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

For it is no less important to take care of the most humble parts than of the most noble, of the hidden than of the visible, since it is from those parts that are destined to serve the others that the labours most necessary for its maintenance and preservation arise.

Let us see how Nature, which the great politician must solely and principally imitate, distributes to all the members of our body, in proportion and measure, the nourishment they need, and that if any one of them does not receive its fair share, the spirits gradually cease to come to it, it atrophies and diminishes, and from it begins the dissolution of our whole body. This serious consideration should lead Your Majesties to diligently care for the common people in your realm. Now, you have many fine means at your disposal to do them well. God has appointed you as his lieutenants to provide for their needs and ensure their salvation. Of all the goods he pours out upon us from his bountiful barrel, you are the distributors of some and the preservers of others.

The main glory of your reign and the increase in the wealth of your people can be reduced to three main means: The regulation and increase of crafts and manufactures, which are now in vogue among us, or may be introduced in the future; The maintenance of navigation, which has declined, even though experience and reason should make it more important than ever; The restoration of trade, which is dying day by day in this kingdom. But, for the present, I will leave aside this point and that of navigation, to dwell on the first, which is the main subject of this discourse, reserving the right to discuss it with you another time, if I understand that Your Majesties find this knowledge as agreeable as it is worthy of them, as it is their duty to regulate and order things and men, and consequently everything that can be imagined and written on this subject.

According to Thales, the first philosopher and great steward, who through the industriousness of his mind can become rich in a year, a man is happy if he is healthy and knowledgeable. And according to Socrates, by the same judgement, knowledge is our only good and ignorance our only evil. He who speaks of the science of any art can become useful to others and can boast, with the wise man Apollonius, that he is a citizen of the whole world; for wherever he goes on earth, if it is inhabited by men, he will find lodging, be loved, and be sought after. Even today, the greatest German lords have their children learn a trade; I do not mention this as an example of duty, but to show how they believe that, in

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

the event of banishment, servitude or necessity, they can draw from it help and support for their lives. It is an old proverb that all lands can nourish the arts.

There is no reasonable master who does not treat a skilled slave more favourably than an ignorant one. At the very least, good craftsmen differ from beasts in more than just their appearance. It is science alone that is truly free, as fortune finds little opportunity to exert its influence here. For it is the worst and smallest part of us, frail and worm-eaten, by which we are subject to it; but we are lords and masters of the best part, in which are situated and founded the highest qualities that are in us, good opinions and sound judgements, arts and sciences, discourses tending towards virtue, the immortal desires to do good, the honest affections to acquire honour, which are things of incorruptible substance, and which cannot be stolen from us.

After having made to Your Majesties a general recommendation of the arts and sciences and endeavoured to bring before your eyes their beauty in its own light, let us now join the two great points that make up the whole of human action, the useful and the pleasant. Just as fire ignites when it encounters a combustible body, so too does our natural affection for learning and knowledge warm and inflame itself in the pursuit of the arts, as well as its own natural object. Nature, giving man this beautiful gift of understanding, which elevates him not only above the beasts, but above man, but above the elements and even the heavens, wanted him to be like a blank slate on which he could imprint all kinds of spiritual images without confusion, and that his will be filled, like the first clay, with an insatiable desire to receive many forms, so that from his knowledge, like a well-stocked storehouse, he might draw the arts necessary for the maintenance and accommodation of life, which we may say are as many rays of his reason, flowing and pouring forth from the understanding through the will, upon the sensible operations, from which first and naturally proceeds all the sufficiency he can have.

Man is born to live in continual exercise and occupation. Contemplative life is truly the first and closest to God; but without action it remains imperfect and possibly more harmful than useful to republics. Therefore, action sometimes mixed with contemplation brings great benefits to human society. With civil occupations hindered and as if dormant in the bosom of contemplation, the Republic would necessarily fall into ruin. Now, that action alone is more

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

profitable to it than contemplation without action is sufficiently proven by human necessity, and it must be concluded that if the love of truth desires contemplation, the union and profit of our society seeks and demands action. Aristotle rightly says of the one who separates himself from men, that he is either more than a man, having no need of others and being self-sufficient, or less than a man, since man is a social animal by nature and born, by the judgement of his reason, not only for himself, but for the benefit of his fellow citizens, with whom he must unite through mutual services and reciprocal duties. This is what nature teaches us in its various creations, which are all made for one another.

Now, what better testimony can a man give of the good he receives from his contemplation than by communicating it to others? In human society, civility is learned, the desire to please in order to be pleased is kindled; and, just as in the bodies of animals all the parts live, feed, and take on spirit and movement through the connection they have with each other, so too do men maintain themselves united and joined in their society by a chain of common affection and by that Gordian knot of respect for the public good, which can only be dissolved by the sword. It follows that the greatest service one can render to the State is to ensure that no part of it remains idle; and consequently that it is both useful and honourable to cultivate with industry and judgement the natural faculties of the men who live there, to make them suitable for the whole and profitable for the maintenance and preservation of the universal body of which they are animated members, causing action to burst forth from top to bottom, as the only vital spirit that gives it a vigorous pulse, a sign of its perfect health.

Your Majesties possess a great state, pleasant in its layout, abundant in riches, flourishing in its people, powerful in its good and strong cities, invincible in arms, triumphant in glory. Its territory is capable of supporting its infinite number of inhabitants, its fertility provides them with food, its abundance of livestock provides them with clothing; for the maintenance of their health and the contentment of their lives, they have the mildness of the sky, the temperature of the air, and the goodness of the waters. For their defence and housing, the materials are suitable and convenient for building houses and fortifying places. If it is a source of extreme contentment for your people to be born and raised in France, that is to say, in the most beautiful, freest, and happiest climate in the world, your glory should be no less than to hold an empire that can rightly be

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

called incomparable. For France alone can do without all its neighbouring lands, but all its neighbouring lands cannot do without it. It has infinite riches, both known and yet to be discovered.

If one considers it carefully, it is the most complete body of any kingdom that the Sun can see from its rising to its setting, whose members are more diverse and yet better related according to the symmetry required for a beautiful state. In each of its provinces, all kinds of beautiful and useful arts can be established. It alone can be the whole world. The smallest province in France provides Your Majesties with its wheat, wine, salt, cloth, wool, iron, oil and woad, making it richer than all the Perus in the world. This is what draws them all to her. But of these great riches, the greatest is the inexhaustible abundance of her men, who know how to manage them: for they are gentle spirits, active and full of intelligence, of fine character, composed of an ingenious, artificial nature, capable of inventing and doing. This statement may seem paradoxical, but it is not. For although France is overflowing with men, and one might think that it is overwhelmed and burdened by them, this is, in a word, only due to a lack of order, and its greatest asset, through ignorance or negligence in employing them, becomes its greatest liability. Moreover, who does not know that this order is the entelechy of states, the first and most perfect act of these great organic bodies, and the well-coordinated harmony of the elements of which they are composed?

No animal is born into the world more foolish than man; but in a few years he can be made capable of great service. Whoever can make good use of this living instrument, this useful creature, capable of any discipline and any task, can boast of having achieved the highest level of economy in his household. And in matters of policing, the northern peoples make better and more regular use of it than we do today. Several great Roman men have derived great benefits from it in their private lives. Cato, among others, the elder Crassus and Cassius, the former of whom, as we read, spared neither time, expense nor diligence in instructing and training servants in this skill, which can make them fit to serve well and be profitable. We even find that he made a trade and merchandise of it. In France, we generally lack this knowledge; and yet we do not enjoy such a proper and domestic good enough to know how to use it, or we neglect it with too much nonchalance, to our detriment and to the detriment of the public.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

Hence, most of our men are forced to seek employment and work elsewhere, some in Spain, some in England, some in Germany, and some in Flanders.

How many more years will Raudent remain among us, able-bodied, robust, in the prime of life and health, wandering day and night here and there, without any profession or fixed abode? Everyone sees him every day with astonishment. The crossroads of cities and the main roads are swarming with them, and their importance draws from the hands of charity what it was accustomed to grant only to the old, the weak and the destitute. Truly, France has this glory, uncommunicable to any other country, that it has been established since ancient times as the true home of liberty; that slavery finds no foothold there; that even the serf of a foreigner is freed as soon as he sets foot there. But since, for good and Christian reasons, servitude has been abolished, it remains for the public to take care to employ men in crafts and works that combine private profit with the common good.

The man most knowledgeable in matters of policing is not the one who, through harsh punishment, exterminates brigands and thieves, but the one who, through the occupation he gives to those who are committed to his government, prevents there from being any. What can be achieved by establishing in each province of this kingdom several different workshops for various types of manufacturing, depending on what is convenient there. This will undoubtedly create fine nurseries of craftsmen, which will bring great wealth to the country. And this will undoubtedly bring down a thousand kings and a thousand gallows, without resorting to the thunderbolts of Justice, whose spectacles are as horrible as they are necessary.

There are several kinds of serfs; but those who are serfs by choice are more natural, having no shame in leading a miserable and needy life. These are Frenchmen unworthy of the name of liberty, and whom, with all justice and natural equity, one can compel to work. Thus industry will be promoted among a large number of men who languish uselessly. Thus the public will be relieved, and it will be proven that there is no art so small that it does not provide food and clothing for its man. Thus trade will increase, which is properly only the result of artifice; which is the basin of its fountain from which public necessity drinks, and which spills over its edges enough water to satisfy strangers, without allowing them to draw from it as they do.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

Our late King, of immortal memory, made known to many subjects his honourable passion for embellishing his kingdom with all kinds of artifice. He willingly accepted what was proposed to him for this purpose, favoured it with advantageous privileges, and sometimes provided the main nerve that gave it movement. His royal care flowed curiously through all the members of this State and was judiciously applied to whatever appeared likely to contribute to its greatness. These good intentions, which God undoubtedly placed in his heart for the benefit of his people, were followed by various outcomes, some profitable, others not at all in keeping with the sincerity of his intentions, but all of which serve to recognise him as a great prince and good king. He who attempts many things cannot succeed in all of them as he would wish.

In this laudable desire that possessed him, and which you must inherit as well as his sceptre, Your Majesties will allow me to point out to them a point worthy of principal observation, where error is common and almost natural to all men. It is that we usually value foreign things more than our own, and that we seek far away what we have close at hand. To see our neighbour's wife as beautiful in our eyes, pleasing to our imagination, we must not suddenly hate and despise our own wife. It would be more appropriate to judge dispassionately whether the unfamiliar makeup, the new look of a face, or the unfamiliar adornment does not corrupt our vision and bring illusions to our judgement, thereby corrupting it and giving it an advantage over the familiar and natural beauty that we possess, for in that case, would it not be better to add what we like, since it is possible for us to do so, and take every opportunity for contentment in what we have at hand, which we can enjoy without cost, acquire without effort, and preserve without danger?

I wish to make it clear to Your Majesties that France, your sole love and your dearest delight, is full of these fine arts and useful crafts, which foreigners who practise them like us would like to deceive us forever, appropriating for themselves, against all rights, this naive and legitimate industry. But anyone who wishes to judge this matter with sound judgement, without being swayed by opinion or appearances, will find that they have nothing more, I will not say, but that which is as perfect in their hands as in yours. All they borrow is a little foreign lustre and colour that our men could give them if they did not neglect it, being naturally endowed with a singular gentleness and propriety more than any

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

others. There is therefore only this one flaw, if it can be called a flaw, that they cannot be charlatans either with their hands or their words; that they do not inflate the true value of the essence of things with vain superficiality; and that, in a word, they show themselves to be more apt to do good than to boast about it. Let us add to this a vice that is more ours than theirs, which is that most of us do not know how to recognise their competence, and that this leads them to distrust themselves.

Finally, to conclude with their faults rather than their virtues, they do not proceed in their work with sufficient order, and this is undoubtedly a great hindrance to their natural industriousness. The most royal exercise that Your Majesties can undertake is to restore order to what has been disrupted, to regulate and distinguish the arts that have fallen into monstrous confusion, and to re-establish trade and commerce that have been disrupted and troubled for a long time. If you could extract these three points from the chaos in which they are jumbled together and give them a proper and suitable form, then boast of having accomplished a great work, and that from its projection onto the imperfect metals of your subjects you will draw infinite treasures, inestimable fruits, and incomprehensible benefits.

Among labourers, it is not the one who has the most land who gets the most out of his labour, but the one who knows best the natural quality of each of his plots, which seed is most suitable for them and in which season he must sow them. The wealth of a state does not depend simply on its size or the abundance of its people, but on leaving no land uncultivated and judiciously assigning each person to their proper office. In any administration, there is no negligence more pernicious than not knowing those whom one commands, no laziness more prejudicial than not exploring what they are most naturally suited to. All this boils down to this point: that in the State as well as in the family, it is a mixed blessing of the greatest benefit to manage men well according to their particular and proper inclinations. And on consideration of this relationship they have with each other, with regard to the point of utility, combined with several other reasons that would be long to deduce, it is quite appropriate to maintain, contrary to the opinion of Aristotle and Xenophon, that one cannot divide the economy of the state without dismantling the main part of its whole, and that the science of acquiring goods, as they call it, is common to republics as well as to families. For my part, I cannot help but be astonished that in their political

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

treatises, otherwise so diligently written, they have forgotten this public household, to which the necessities and burdens of the State oblige us to pay particular attention.

PART TWO

(THE ANATOMY OF A STATE)

There is a great and very close resemblance between well-composed bodies of states and bodies of animals. Animals are governed by three faculties that are more different than diverse, which doctors call souls. The first is the vegetative soul, which they share with trees and plants, and which resides in the liver and the blood that is produced there. This soul nourishes the body and is dispersed in its members along with the blood in its veins. The ploughmen and labourers working the earth, hold the place of this soul in the Republic. The second is the sensitivity, which resides in the heart, the source of natural heat, and from the heart spreads throughout the body via the arteries. In the State, craftsmen and tradesmen are properly like this faculty. The third is the animal and has its seat in the brain, where it presides over instincts and actions and through the organs of the nerves divided into several branches, gives movement to the whole body. The merchants who are in civil society can with much reason be assigned to the latter. Through these three kinds of men, (i) labourers, (ii) craftsmen and (iii) merchants, every state is maintained, sustained and nurtured. Through them all profit comes and is made, and are the various digestion, no more and no less than in the natural body, always transmuted into something better.

All wealth, which comes and goes in republics, as from one hand to the other, passes through these three degrees of honour, designed to develop and perfect the child of profit, which is born, moreover, as from two living springs that never dry up, from the mind and the hand, operating separately or jointly in natural subjects. Whether we look at one or the other, your peoples have the most vivid and abundant sources of it. For this reason there is no clay in their bottoms. They have no need to seek this fire from their neighbours. They are composed of a choleric humour, to which Galien gives prudence in negotiations and activity in work.

Moreover, we must not draw any conclusions to their disadvantage from the fact that several famous men, following in the footsteps of Caesar, Tacitus and Trebellius Polio, have considered them to be light. All the more so when, if the intention of these judicious authors is fully explored, even though they are passionate about other things and do not favour us, it will be judged that this title is more honourable than offensive to us; and that under a word of

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

ambiguous interpretation they would designate our best listeners, that natural lightness and promptness which we have in all things. For it is indeed true that there is no nation in the world with a sharper mind than the French, better born to arms, letters, merchandise and artifice. Your Majesties can see this enough every day, as they pass through the rushes of your great city of Paris, which is not a city, but a nation, as Aristotle of Babilone said; and, to stoop as far as truth allows, which is not a nation, but a world.

For the glory of weapons, this is a point seen at the tip of the spear, two thousand years ago. For the honour of letters, and especially of elogution, since the famous Athens and the great Rome, no one disputes it with us; even so we have a good share in that of the latter. As for the abundance of merchandise and the men who work in it, there are more merchants in France and more trade harvests than there are men in any other kingdom whatsoever, than there are useless herbs and fodder. As for the industry of arts, it is from us that all other peoples derive it. And we still have, as if by right of precipice, more than they do. You lack only one thing, O great State: knowledge of yourself and the use of your strength!

Honour nourishes the arts and the arts nourish men. It is from the affection shown to them by great kings, princes and lords that flows and insinuates into them the sap that sustains them. Thus painting and sculpture became popular in Greece and Asia under the great Alexander. This is how letters came into vogue among us under the great king Frangois. And since then, in our time, arms and the structure of buildings have flourished under our great Henry. When your Majesties wish to favour fine minds and reach out to them to draw them out of the crowd of the people, where they are pressed down, hidden and held back by a fatal necessity, they will discover by this means and open up a thousand sources of profit perennially increasing in glory and prosperity. Then, once their waves of gold, more precious than those of the Pactolus, have taken their course not only through this kingdom, but from this kingdom throughout the world, people will come from both ends of the earth to drink and enjoy themselves, but your natural subjects first. For it will never be reasonable, either by law or by example, for foreigners to be equal in privileges and to compete with citizens in all advantages. Human society commands us to do good to all, but to our servants over all. We would need a small piece of the Anglo-Saxon spirit in this situation.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

It was not without great consideration that Solon, a great man of trade and negotiation, made a law which did not allow a foreigner the right of the bourgeoisie in Athens unless he was exiled from his country. Our twelfth King Louis, having the same regard for those whom he had admitted to the use and participation of our rights as Solon had for those whom he wished to ban from his republic, revoked the privilege of naturality from all foreigners who had withdrawn from his kingdom. For certain reasons, they may be forced in times of peace as in times of war, or admitted subject to certain conditions. Let them have free access among us, as they have always had more than anywhere else in the world; but at the very least, let their negotiations and privileges be limited and circumstantial.

The ancient Greeks called them enemies, as did the Latins, according to the remark made by Cicero in the twelve tables; and even today they are called our 'hostes' in our common language. In some seasons, the reason of the State commands the princes to attract them. Thus our eleventh Louis repopulated his city of Bordeaux, allowing all foreigners, both friends and enemies, especially the English, to enjoy his privileges. Thus Richard, King of England, filled his main city of London with craftsmen and merchants, granting native rights to all those who lived there for ten years. Thus the great king Frangois, having built Le Havre in Normandy, in a short time domiciled a large number of families, attracted to his new walls by the exemptions he gave them. Now that France has no more emptiness than nature, you don't have to work very hard on your royal thoughts to evoke foreigners. They come of their own accord, but more to take away than to bring.

Your Majesties must, of course, receive a little better than others and more willingly those who, as for the payment of our bourgeoisie, can communicate to us some profitable and advantageous industry. The examples of our neighbours, who make better use of us than we do ourselves, lead and instruct us in this. A fine mind must enjoy its natural rights in everything. There is often as much distance between one man and another as between man and beast. Emulation is in all things a great spur to good deeds. There is no shorter way to make those who practise them reach the top very quickly than to make them compete in industry as if in a powder fight for honour and prizes. This forces them to look

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

after themselves more closely, to consider carefully everything that can help them to facilitate their art, and to organise their work better.

Consider that even in theatres our singers and comedians are all languid, unchalant and unwilling to show what they know when they perform alone in a village; but, if there is another company, then by uncontention and envy who will win the prize they make every effort to do well, and not only prepare themselves, but their stage and their instruments themselves, with all the care and variety they can bring to it. In this public work divided into so many arts and trades, your subjects must be made to observe one thing above all: not to mix and diversify it so much in one hand. The Germans and Flemings are more imitable, who willingly do only one job. So they do it better, whereas our French, wanting to do everything, are forced to do it badly. This is a great hindrance and distraction from the right path, which leads to the perfection of a singular thing. The mind becomes weaker, applying itself attentively to various subjects, and cannot have the time or the strength to find what it is looking for, what is good, when it is diverted by necessity or curiosity.

To remedy this and prevent the fickleness of our inclination to change, Your Majesties will allow, if they please, that in the various provinces of France, several workshops be set up for the devices that are universally needed, giving the superintendence and management of these, with useful and honourable privileges, to capable minds with the intelligence required for each according to their species, so that they can divide the tasks and labours between the craftsmen according to their ability or natural ability. And from this well-established order will arise the exquisite science and excellent practice of the arts and trades for the good and utility of your subjects, to the recommendation of your prudence and to the glory of this State.

But, inasmuch as we are not perfect and do not live with perfect people, let us speak of this point according to the course of the world, where everyone takes his aim at profit, and turns his eye wherever he sees some glimmer of usefulness, to which man is inclined, either by nature, or by food and custom that is said to be second nature. Also the most skilful, and who have better studied the book of affairs by (being) determined from common experience, have held that the various necessities that each felt in his particular, were the first cause of general communities. For the most common bonding of men and

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

their most frequent coming together depends on the help they give each other and the mutual services they render each other from hand to hand, but in such a way that each is more inclined to his own particular benefit as if from his own movement and to speak of this other general movement that nature gives him, without his being almost aware of it, as his primary motive. So much hassle, so much labour by so many men, has no other aim than gain. The circle of business is reduced to this centre; the necessity of movement circumscribes this point.

Nature gives us being; we get good being partly from discipline, partly from art. Leaving aside discipline, which, if it could be done as easily as we might wish, should be the same and equal for all, since it is important for the good of the State that all live well and honourably, let us stop our discussion on the arts, which, as we have already said, are as diverse among men as the customs of life are different. To speak of them generally as they are practised, I will reduce them to those which provide us with the necessary, the useful, the healthy and the pleasant, insofar as they all work for some end, and their end consists principally in these things.

If we want to repeat this point from its origin, since the earth, cursed by the transgression of our first kinsmen, was condemned to bear brambles and thorns, toil and labour were given to us and handed down to us as if by right of succession, according to this decree: "You shall eat your bread by the sweat of your brow". So life and work are inseparably linked. So we cannot live without food, and we cannot have this food without tilling the earth, and from it men take it, insofar as all live naturally from their mothers. Of this laborious agriculture which, continually, fights against its sterility and the strength, by doing it well, to give some reward for so much toil and to pay the wear and tear of so many loans. Hence the care required for planting and maintaining vines and other fruit trees. From there, the water recirculated to water the meadows, in order to germinate and grow herbs. Then there is the care and feeding of the livestock, whose flesh we eat and whose clothes we remove for clothing. It is mainly in these things that the rustic life is occupied, of which agriculture is the work and the science.

If we are to abide by the maxim that the most ancient is the best, then the art of farming is certainly the best of all, and the ancients called it holy and sacred either because they considered it to be such, or because those who practise it are

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

tranquil and peaceful, friends of simplicity, enemies of tumult and of all discord. To cut a long story short, ploughing, and this is the opinion of Aristotle and Cato, must be considered the beginning of all faculties and riches, under which or with which is included the cattle. In the time of our fathers, the best people, even our nobility, lived in the fields, with as much contentment as rest of mind. Since the cities have been frequented, mischief has increased, idleness has formed, luxury has been fed, and idleness has become fashionable. Between us now, as between the Thespians, it is a shame to handle the earth. Who can have changed the nature of things? Was it reason or opinion? Was it virtue or vice?

Notwithstanding this disdain for ploughing and this contempt for ploughmen, I don't think there is any country in the world where more of the one is made, where more of the other is found, than in France. More men would still be employed in this noble work, for the great good and profit of this kingdom, if most of them, convinced of a false honour and often illegitimate gain, did not throw themselves, as in a safe harbour, sheltered from storms and tempests, into the arms of public offices, This superfluous and burdensome exercise ceasing, they would be forced to go back to cultivating their own land, now entrusted to farmers, mercenaries or servants who are more concerned with increasing its value and fatness than with tending and improving it. It is true that our peasants have degenerated a great deal and are becoming worse every day; our land, likewise, seems to be suffering as a result, but that is our fault.

They forget us as we have forgotten them; they despise us as we have despised them; they are anxious to do good and those who do it to them or make them do it only as little as they can. They are treated like slaves; they only work for pay. Let us not blame the untimeliness of the seasons or the malignity of the stars for this, even if it were possible to avenge them; the closest cause of their infertility is the poverty of the farmers. How few there are who own them in their own right, and as their work is all for others, do they not lose the care and desire to do it well? How many of them are not distracted by their disputes and squabbles? And yet, is the land free of the weeds that choke the good seeds? How many are there whose harnesses are dying of hunger, and who are themselves malnourished? And how will they be able to work hard and tread on the ploughshares? All of these problems have been apparent for many years and will become more noticeable and more frequent if Your Majesties do not, out of their goodness, order them to do so.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

As the humours always flow to the lower and debilitated parts, it is always the people who suffer most from all these burdens. It could be said that ploughmen are the feet of the State, for they support it and bear all the burden of the body. Your Majesties must guard against weariness, for if they grew weary, the head would suffer like the other members. He would no longer go where he wanted if he lacked them. You must therefore take very special care of them. It is through them that you bind your armies, that you pay your garrisons, that you equip your places, that you fill your savings. It is through them that your nobility lives and that your towns are fed. And, if we take it this way, we can say that they are still to the State what the liver is to the body. One produces the blood by which spirits are carried and distributed to all the members; the others provide the food by which life is sustained; so that you yourself need their help as well as your subjects, who all together, I have no doubt, speaking through the mouths of your three States assembled, will intercede very humbly with Your Majesties on behalf of their nourishers and will obtain the satisfaction and contentment that deserve so much labour taken for the public, soaked in sweat and very often in tears.

If, naturally, one is obliged to love and preserve some, is it not those who sustain oneself and others? If charity must have a certain outlook and distribute the effects of its piety by certain degrees, for whom should it be used sooner than for weak and innocent men? If justice, to which God entrusts the protection of the poor as well as the maintenance of the rich, is subject to watch over the good of all, on whom will it bind its eyes more openly than on those who are exposed to any insult? For the rebels themselves, numbers often provide an opportunity for forgiveness and salvation. What need is there to flee from those who are always ready to obey? We always relieve the most willing as much as we can.

And what people should be more shunned than those who stretch out their neck to the yoke and, having received it, bear it so gently? In conclusion, anyone called to govern the people must love them in order to be loved by them. For their love is their firmest bulwark and their impregnable fortress. Whoever loves them does not impose burdens on them that he would not like to touch with his fingertips; for he himself weighs them down and judges them carefully whether they are equal or disproportionate to their strength. And whoever spares them in

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

their burdens, measures them to his advantage in case of need. For everything they have is his by power and goodwill. You have to work to feed yourself and feed yourself to work.

PART THREE

(THE ART OF ARTS)

This is why I have briefly dealt with what has been said above about agriculture, in order to move on to the particular subject of manual labour on some natural subject. For natural things are the principles of artificial things, which properly belong to man, according to the Trimagist, who says that "the rays of God are actions; those of the world are natures; those of man are arts and sciences." The arts, in truth, are not as absolutely necessary to our life as agriculture; but they are made so by usage and custom, and without them it would be lacking and imperfect.

Thus art, which is merely an imitation of nature, applying itself to the handling of several things, which without it would remain useless or of little use, faggots them into many kinds, according to the intention of the person exercising it, either for his own convenience or for that of others, which makes it more or less practicable, according to whether it is more or less great. Natural things that are more easily communicated, as being more perfect and closer to divine virtue, are more highly esteemed. For example, the air we breathe, the light we see, the fire that moves us. In this way, the artificial ones that are more widely used merit first place in a State, for the sake of utility. Every society must be abundantly supplied with them and from itself. It must not borrow elsewhere what it needs: for, being able to have only the mercy of others, it becomes weaker by the same amount.

Whether she probes the earth in several places, digging down to Vargile, according to Plato's precept, to obtain this water, it is only necessity alone that should compel her to take elsewhere what she does not have. What each person takes with them is properly their own, not what they have acquired or borrowed from others. To provide themselves with all commodities, they must spare no labour. This can only be done through all the useful and honest arts. Since usefulness is our main consideration, which of the arts should we start with than forging, without which the others cannot be used? As some naturalists say, that in the beginning, the world did not want to be a world, and that the bodies did not want to join and measure together to give nature a common form, so that everything remained in turmoil and combustion, until, as the earth grew in size by means of the bodies attached to it, it began to give itself and its surroundings

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

a firm and secure base for all the other bodies, It is thus possible to imagine that the arts, confused and confused in the ideas of the first men, not wanting to be incorporated from several different parts and stubbornly mixing them, would never have achieved the union and correspondence in which we now see them, if this art, which contains them all in power and reduces them all in action, had not given them a firm and lasting consistency in the future.

We will call it the art of the arts, the common element of their elements, the hand of all working hands, the first instinct of invention; and we will say that it is, alongside the others, which are moved by it, the mover and organ of movement; the means that the imagination, stirred by curious research, has found in nature to bring to perfection everything that depends on artificial operation. His labour is also employed on a metal that can be transformed into any shape you want, that can be turned into all sorts of uses, that has so much strength on the most solid bodies, that explains the way to all works, that indeed throws many men into their grave before time, but that also preserves and gives life to many others. This art, therefore, so great, so universal, so necessary to all your peoples, so dear to the Barbarians, so sought after by the savages, must be singularly commended to you, when there would be no other consideration than this: that through the weapons it manufactures, the glory of this State has risen to Heaven, its boundaries have spread from sea to sea, and its virtue - this name properly belongs to our value - has made all the peoples of the earth tremble.

I say this to shut the mouths of those who would accuse me of speaking to such high and exalted Majesties about things which they consider to be so low and mechanical, without considering that all this discourse tends only to bring your eyes back to your poor people to recognise what their life and exercise is in order to induce you to reopen the sources of their gain, whose streams are gradually drying up and will soon run dry, to put the work of this Kingdom back on credit, to relegate idleness to foreigners, in short to give everyone the opportunity to be content, to complain to no-one but themselves. To continue my speech, I dare to assure Your Majesties, - and when, and if I prove with necessity the usefulness of the art of which I speak, - that there are more than five hundred thousand people in your State who live as salamanders in the midst of this fire, that it extends to the rest in so many different trades that it would take several pages to enumerate them.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

I think I have now done the main thing if I can make Your Majesties understand that not a single one is missing and that all of them can be practised perfectly, that our neighbours have learnt them from us and that the schoolboys do not yet feel the masters. England is a sufficient example of this, which since our civil wars, taking advantage of the confusion in this Kingdom, has learned so well from the skill of our men, who came to her as if to a port of refuge, that she now practises with glory and profit these same Arts that we had long kept as our property, from whose work we alone made do; in such a way that we have even entertained our gain, now retained by his labour for herself. Our men still live with her and their children are to her like trophies of our deprivation. It is to them alone that they owe the manufacture of all kinds of weapons, locksmithing, cutlery and all other trades of a similar nature. What I say about England, I say about Flanders and especially about Holland. For in this very subject, it owes us more than it owes the Germans, even though it is so similar to them in genius, language and customs.

Germany has always claimed a large share of the credit for ironworking; but the work we make of it, apart from the opinion which puts a price on foreign things, has always been well worth and is worth just as much as theirs; and when I say better, the proof will not contradict me. It is the custom of people to prefer labour to foreign artifice; of us of all people, who love nothing so much as what we do not know. Who can do it himself, must he do it through someone else? Is he a good farmer, who puts his hand in his purse to buy what he can gather from his own land, who in order to make someone else's land worthwhile leaves his own fallow, who, having arms, cannot find them to work and turns to his neighbour? Your Majesties have enough men in this kingdom, as industrious or more industrious than foreigners. Give them a way to show what they know how to do, and they will do wonders. This way is to no longer allow their labours to be choked by those of others, but instead to allocate to them all the manufacturing composed of iron and steel, so that from now on they do not just live, which they do with difficulty, but that they live by making a profit from their work, and this will undoubtedly result in the glory, strength and wealth of this State. Otherwise, there can be no doubt that, as they continue to lack earnings, these very necessary arts, which are already very hard-working, will in future be abandoned as unsuccessful, which cannot happen without universal damage. Remedy this in time. Do not let the forge window go out; it is easier to keep it than to relight it if it is dead.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

Firstly, I represent to Your Majesties that all hardware, in the manufacture of which both inside and outside the kingdom, not only towns but entire provinces are engaged, can be made abundantly and at a very reasonable price in the countries of your Lordships, that to admit and receive foreign hardware there is to take the lives of several thousand of your subjects of whom this industry is the heritage and this work the basis of their income; it is to diminish your own wealth, which is made and increased by that of your peoples. It is to cut the sinews of your State and seek to keep the instruments of its value by borrowing from others. If you did not have such men, they would have to be summoned from all sides, in their hands is the main service of the Republic. The Turks and many other peoples are well aware of this, and they keep them when they can catch them. Too many of them once left this kingdom. If they had remained here, we would be stronger and richer. In the time of our fathers, what thing was more forbidden than carrying iron and weapons to barbarians? What did they think of those who showed them how to handle and manufacture them? It's like cutting your own throat with your own coat.

As far as major works are concerned, if Your Majesties consider the profit that can be made from them as much as foreigners feel it, they will give orders for the country to provide itself with them, through work that is as abundant as it is legitimate. If it can easily do so, it will prove itself by effect when it pleases you to order it. If he can do it better than anyone else, every day experience proves it by the value and price of his work. So make us happy with the fruit of our industry, that is to say, give us back to ourselves. Make us worth what we are worth. Make us known for what we are, so that people cease to think that rough and coarse men have more delicate hands than us, more ingenious minds, bodies that are more patient with work, or that, on the contrary, artifice is natural, industry ordinary and labour pleasant.

The thing itself seems to persuade us of what we have not yet been able to recognise and practise by judgement. Let us stop and look at one particular example, as it would take too much time and too many words to go into everything in detail. There is a great deal of counterfeiting going on in this kingdom. Every year Germany uses almost all its hammers to forge them for us. Almost the whole of Lorraine imitates and seconds it in this work; both are driven by profit. And yet what do our craftsmen, who are much better and more

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

loyal, do? They hunger and languish. Is it because they don't know how to make this work? Nothing less; their tools sell for twice as much. This is the grievance, we are looking for cheapness, and yet we approve of the abundance in which it is found.

He who knows little of the nature and use of things esteems them otherwise than by their end. One would give lead the shape and form of a scythe, but not the quality required to cut grass; one would make a sickle of tin, but its teeth would be too soft to cut wheat. You could make a gold or silver cob, but, if you thought you could, it would not be so much for the service as for the material. This makes it easy to understand that all tools have their price for their use and that it decreases the more they leave it and are less capable of it, I am constantly assured that by working faithfully they cannot give them at such a low price as the French, who are doubly obliged and to flee well, both to earn and to avoid the decay which would ruin them. But of the foreigners, if there are any good ones, one among six, that is a lot; I am talking about the best; for the others, barely two or three per hundred.

So who does not know in what esteem all this work is held by France? Who, walking through the countryside, does not hear the complaints of poor labourers deceived in their purchase? Who, in the towns, does not see the rubbish that the merchants have in their shops? The remedy for no longer being deceived in this way, and for retaining in France more than eight hundred thousand livres that these goods generate every year, is to restore the factory industry, which is losing ground, and for this purpose, as I have predicted, to set up a workshop in each province, the labour of which, combined with that done in the country, which is much more legitimate than abroad, will be able to supply it usefully, and even with savings. Because Germany and Lorraine are no longer abundant in this kingdom, it will be easy to reduce the price, by the certainty of unloading, which is the only and most important factor in manufacturing. Nothing causes so much vility as abundance; abundance comes from the labour of many; and the labour of many cannot be lacking and in things that sell well. In this way, the country will be doubly profited, by the manufacture of work and by the employment of its men. In this way the work will become more legitimate, recognised as such by those to whom it is shown, or rejected if it is something else. Thus the fraud that will be practised in this art will be

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

detrimental to its authors more than to the public; for now who is not caught in it?

First of all, everything that has the appearance of a fake is sold as a fake, iron as well as steel; they cannot be discerned with the eye. There is some deceit, it is only for the form; it is done by people without knowledge. Moreover, it is not only in the large cities that they are debited, but in the towns and villages where the assemblies and marches are held. More than a hundred thousand of them are brought in from all sides, and they are carried here and there through our provinces, and God knows who is not deceived. I say the same of sickles, and of all other such merchandise, for the sale of which the fairs use the cheap price as a lure on which the people are induced to throw themselves by poverty, and very often and for lack of anything better. The inconvenience for those who handle the arts of forging has never been so great as it is at present. I will make Your Majesties aware of this when the opportunity arises.

Germany is very keen on this type of work. The largest towns are populated by its craftsmen, who mainly unload in France, because it is the country in the world where everything is done better and more quickly. However, they have never had it so easy as in recent years, when, instead of long and costly land carriages, the Dutch have opened up and made it easier for them to use sea carriages, which are now used to bring in these heavy and massive goods at much lower cost. Thus your men, who, because of the distance of the places and the long crossing of the roads, were less inconvenienced by the foreign manufacture, are now suffocated by it, or even see themselves almost all forced to give up work. Added to this is the fact that there is no one with the spirit or the means, who has yet begun to use the machinery by which these works are easily advanced and completed; This is not due to a lack of knowledge and expertise, but rather to the fear we have of not being unloaded with the merchandise, should it be undertaken in bulk; which will gladly be done to the satisfaction of Your Majesties and to the public good, if the necessary order is brought to it. Only a skilful and courageous man is needed to put several of them on the right track.

Nothing can be done without means, but everything with means. We have the three main ones: (i) places, (ii) materials, (iii) men, and, to give shape to things, (iv) industry; for places, (v) woods and (vi) water; for materials, (vii) steel and

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

(viii) iron; for men, (ix) good craftsmen; when I say good, that is to say capable of carrying out and perfecting all work well. I will not say here that, if the goods made in Germany, Lorraine, Flanders, England and other places were no longer available in this kingdom, the nicest craftsmen of these countries, who would not be so well employed as they are now, would flock there from all over to look for work. For it would then be up to us, following their own examples, to accept or refuse them. If they were willing or able to teach us something, I would consider them worthy of the hostel; if not, I would advise us to join our own. You can never have too many artisans in a state. The first reason: for the fact that the Republic suffers a great deal of inconvenience for want of them, and allows its faculties to be wasted on foreigners, who provide it with hand-made works. The second, insofar as there is nothing more dangerous than when subjects are divided into two parts, without means, and the artisans are as means between the poor and the rich, the good and the evil, the wise and the foolish, they can prevent the seditions of some and the factions of others.

I will not detain your consideration any longer on the dependencies of the forge. I only ask your Majesties to imagine that, as all the trades and manual labour that you see practised everywhere need, as I have said, its assistance, it occupies an infinite number of men, so that from there you will conceive a desire to attribute all the exercises and profits of it to your subjects, to preserve for them this champion of artifice, the greatest of all. Force the nature of fire, which is said to be incapable of generalization, and allow it to generate an inestimable gain for France, which, passing through the hands of many, will flow in small streams to the bottom of your savings and swell them greatly.

Give yourself the satisfaction of seeing laziness driven out of the boutiques to hammer blows, of seeing iron transmute into gold in the hands of your men, instead of France's gold being transformed into iron by the artifice of foreigners. Give yourself the glory of having the best craftsmen in the world and the most industrious in everything to do with weapons of war or instruments of peace. Give yourselves the glory of having in your country something to defend and something to attack, when courage and reason oblige you to do one or the other. And, remembering that all States are preserved by the same means as they were acquired, value everything that provides the means for these means. The military profession has always been considered heroic, and it is true if anything in the world is. It is through it that men acquire glory and obedience; before it

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

the laws are silent and the magistrates submit; to it the arts and sciences pay homage; from it is the acquisition of peace and the maintenance of rest, from which proceeds the good and the happiness of men. But from whence are the instruments she uses to make such fine works as forging? and must not some honour remain with her craftsmen?

To conclude finally with the usefulness of this art, I say and maintain before Your Majesties that it is more precious than any other of a similar nature, since of all goods this one is the most perfect and closest to the divine quality, which is more common and spreads to many at all times. And in this way the point will remain established: that gold is valued more for its price, but that iron must be valued more for its use.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

PART FOUR

(THE ART OF CLOTHING)

After the arts which contribute their industry to the maintenance of life, and to the manufacture of works, I find five principal ones concerning the clothing of man: (i) footwear, (ii) cloth weaving, (iii) wool drapery, (iv) silk manufacture and (v) leather tanning. Ever since our first parents applied fig leaves to their naked bodies, the care of dressing has been natural and invention has always increased. What was at first a sign of shame to them has become a source of pride and glory to us. Peacocks that are on the receiving end of Favour's goad do not display their fine feathers any better than men touched by vanity, their fine clothes, when they want to blend in well, and intend to please the ladies. Today even many take advantage of this over others who do not appear so much by their outward adornment, but who very often harbour more courage, merit and virtue within. Be that as it may, it is mainly in this subject that luxury is born, grows and reigns, the offspring of false glory, to which nothing is ever too close, and from which come those excessive deprivations which usually cause the ruin of the best houses and the poverty of the most illustrious families. Because of him these words of reproach, such a one carries a wood, a mill, a meadow on his back.

It is not in our time, but at all times, that the need for clothing has turned into vain pomp. The best Estates have suffered great disorders, which have often been forced to remedy by severe laws, even our own several times, and now it is needed more than ever; because, to speak the truth, it is now impossible to make a distinction from the outside. The shopkeeper is dressed like a gentleman. The latter can no longer be known by anything other than good credence and good manners. If this is missing, God forbid any difference. Who can fail to notice how this conformity of ornament introduces corruption into our ancient discipline? Who does not see how the villain who sees himself as brave wants to be on a par with the nobleman, believing that dress makes the man? Who does not see as the gentleman, feeling despised by the bourgeois, to return what he is given, despises the lord? If we continue thus, there will no longer be any question of being; there will only have to be appearance.

The more you shine, the better the gold. But keep your finger on the pulse!
What order can be expected from this debt, which turns into a habit, and this

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

habit into a custom? What obedience for the future to superiors? Who will take more and greater glory from the honour of being commanded? If Your Majesties do not remove us from this confusion and indifference, that is the end of it; all will generally give up true and solid virtue, all will melt away after vanity. Discipline will be banished from the troops and order from the armies. Naive valour will be forced to give in to vain pomp. Insolence will flourish in the cities, tyranny in the fields. Men will become effeminate through too many delights, and women will lose the strength of their households through chastity.

Let us take up the right thread again and begin as if by another leader: of this art which forms its work on the mould of our tests. The need we have to cover it from the heat and protect it from the cold has put it into practice. How useful experience teaches us, our two extremes having such a correspondence together; that the same passion afflicts them, as the same sentiment is favourable to them. This word gives us enough to understand: "Keep your feet and head warm. When you die, live like a beast." Besides, I can't think of any trade that is so purely and frankly lost to us. For I believe that just as many woollen, cotton or beaver hair bats are worn in France, they are made by our hand. Looking for the reasons why foreigners so keen to introduce their manufactures to us have not yet put their fingers to those, I find only one: It is that our head changes shape too often and that on this point alone they cannot take advantage of our inconsistency; but, if they cannot win on the form, they cheat us.

How many master clothmakers have been ruined, and are being ruined every day, by the fraud of the Spanish wools that the Flemish bring us in wool sweat? This is because they sell it all wrapped up. If you unfold it and untwist it, you'll find twenty or thirty pounds of ballast or stones wrapped in the wool, and the wool is also full of sand. One who wanted to notice it judged the waste to be more than a quarter per pound. The Spaniards have this trick that, when they want to shear their sheep, they bathe them and then run them through the sand, so as to sprinkle the wool with it; then they cut it and mix it into bundles.

Double deception: because he himself made it peel and rot. All this can be seen from a lawsuit brought before the Rouen Court of Parliament by some master chapeliers against a Flemish merchant. To remedy this, it would be necessary to order that the wool that has come in be unpacked and put in a granary, then inspected. This would oblige the Flemish postmen who are in Spain, and who possibly consent to fraud, to order it from beyond.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

From this would come another convenience, which is that goods made of foreign cloth, most of which is rotten, and which consequently cannot be worth anything and drinks rain like a sponge, would become of better use, inasmuch as very often it is only worth breaking. This regulation is practised in Lion, where the chapelliers have obtained that the wools are washed and cleaned before being offered for sale. Furthermore, the above should not give rise to the opinion that foreign wools are better than our own, or that we cannot do without them. For, as far as the former is concerned, it is a certainty that Berri wools are softer and better than those from Spain itself, as can be seen from the cappellerie which sells them in Bourges, Orléans, Paris and Lion. As for the second, if we lost all our wool, we would have plenty to sell.

As the flesh is closer than the shirt, the shirt is also closer than the pourpoint, which prevents us from talking about the manufacture of cloth before the drapery. Of all the manufactures that can give in this kingdom, means of living to many people, we have the advantage that in France it is more faithfully and abundantly practised than anywhere else, and that no other country has such good fabrics or more exquisite craftsmanship. The Dutch, who have taken it upon themselves to abolish the practice and take away our former credit, have wanted to encroach on all of our works, especially on this one. But they have found it easier to persuade us than the Barbarians themselves, who, forming their judgement and regulating their choice by essential goodness and by the best use of things, not on the basis of an anticipated opinion, have always preferred French cloth to Dutch cloth, have always discovered the suppositions and counterfeits of the Flemings, even though they packaged their merchandise as is ours, and marked it with the mark of our customs.

For any kind of disguise is not a crime among these people, even if they can gain some advantage from it. Their endeavours succeeded better with Henry the Great, father and husband of Your Majesties, from whom in the end they obtained permission and financial assistance to establish their factory in this kingdom. All the good that has come from this has been the degradation of the trunk cloths that are made there, which are good and fair, to the sole loss of your subjects: because, with regard to artifice and manufacture, our craftsmen have shown how much more industrious and delicate their hands are than all the others and that they were right to oppose those who came to their own house to

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

take away from them the glory and the fruit of such a beautiful and universal industry.

It seems to me that I should point out to Your Majesties how it cannot be that our white canvases do not always surpass the Dutch in goodness and value; for, in the event that our hides are the same, our cleaning, in the judgement of those who know about it, is always natural and better than that which they are forced to use, especially as our waters are fresh, and theirs are muddy, i.e. half salted; Hence this acrimony, which actually whitens, but also eats away at and consumes the cloths, causing them to lose half their use and duration. So now, with the freedom they have to live and manage in France, they prefer to come and get used to clean and convenient places for laundering in this factory than to work there themselves. If Your Majesties do not take care of their subjects, to restore them to their rightful position and remove the usurpers, whose numbers are increasing every day, they will lose ownership of this factory. For as of now it will be found that there are more of our own men, released from the service of their masters or by promise or by increased rent, who work for them, than for those of the country.

Your Majesties must remember that men who are idle and do nothing are led to do evil; that for the good, peace, and wealth of the State, they must preserve in all things and everywhere the exercise of families, which are the nurseries of the Republic; that this exercise must be considered doubly: by men and by women; that idleness corrupts the vigor of some and the chastity of others; that this exercise, being common to both sexes, but principally to those of both sexes who love and seek peace and who live in all simplicity, must be so carefully maintained. In addition, the women, who put almost all their manpower into this manufacture, and who often get more out of it by staying in their homes than their husbands do by worrying so much about it, deserve your compassion, and that, joining their prayers to the usefulness and necessity we have of this work, you keep it in their full and complete possession. But moreover, the advantage that you derive from it over other peoples obliges you to renew and practice the means of retaining it all and to take the opportunity to transport, sell, and distribute it by the hand of your own people, as has been done in the past.

For to conclude this point, Your Majesties will consider, if it pleases them, that we have no better expedient than this to accommodate ourselves to foreign

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

trade, principally that of Spain, which alone takes the place of all others, because, first, the cloth for making sails cannot be obtained elsewhere; secondly, trade with the Indies can only be conducted using white cloth and conscription from Normandy, Brittany, and other provinces of this kingdom; for as regards those from Holland, Flanders, and Germany, very little is transported there. Thus, it remains clear that this industry is one of France's main sources of wealth; that for it, the Poutossi expends almost all its resources; and that without it, even the Spanish would be unable to bring it to Spain. If they have ships, we have wings; and these others, who seek to profit at our expense in every way, right and left, and often use them to fly and approach the East and the West, the North and the South, in the space of a few days; but enough said on this point; let us move on to others.

Necessity drives the work, and use produces abundance. Care and artifice always have their eyes open and their hands at work to fill the gap. If we did not need so much linen, why would so much be made? The same applies to clothing. I don't know whether to praise or blame the temperature of our climates, which, on the one hand, forces us to toil so long and continuously, and, on the other, cures us of the evil of idleness by means of moderation. For why do we work except to acquire life and clothing? Isn't all the rest, if we were wise, superfluous? However, if the care of a gainer is not of nature, we can say that it proceeds in some way from reason, which imbues us with this affection, in order to induce us with more charm and attraction to make ourselves useful to one another, and throws when and where in our hearts the first seed of this charity, which commands us not only to feed, but to clothe the poor. So we were born with a desire to love and help our fellow men; and, if we do otherwise, we will degenerate. We also have the commandment of our master, who obliges us to do this, telling us: "What you do to one of these little ones, I'll do to myself." But that's beside the point; let's get back to our subject.

Of all clothes, the most common are made of cloth. Anyone who can imagine the many thousands of men who swarm in this kingdom will cease to be amazed at the sheer number required, and will understand when and how the labor of so many people can be continuously employed. As drapery is necessary for the use of all, great and small, rich and poor, it is almost practiced in all the provinces of this kingdom, although more abundantly in some than in others. This is because, depending on the convenience of wool, not all of them can be used to

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

the same profit, and so they are not used equally. But in any case, if there's one that can't supply itself, another can more than satisfy it. As, for example, Berry, Picardy and Normandy, with the quantity of fabrics and workers they have, can they not accommodate Bretagne and several other provinces with this manufacture, if need be? Is it our necessity which brings it from England? or our suffering that introduces it? Are we obliged, for want of it, to unload it of what it has of superfluous?

Or, if for lack of policy we allow our industry to be destroyed and our labor to be diverted, what game are we playing by allowing our wool to be transported, and our artisans to lose their way? Are we blind or insane? Foreigners, to our knowledge and belief, sell their most vicious and poorly packaged merchandise in public stores and markets, and the good and loyal French woman is condemned to keep the shop! They are always inventing some new trade to catch us, while the fidelity of the artifice expires and dies of hunger in our hands! For what draper has ever had such a reputation for goodness and beauty as ours of the bucket? A tenth part of our world at least, who once worked and lived, even profited from this trade, cries out and complains either of remaining idle or of no longer having the means to employ themselves, while foreign liberty gains foot by foot and wants to usurp full possession of it.

Our scholars teach us the law. For who does not know that the English learned this craft from us? Anyone who came back to Hanton and other places where it is more practiced, and did not know how it is, would be very astonished to hear in almost all the workshops only the French language. Still among the English live several of our people, who have put or wanted to put the shuttle in the hand. Previously they brought to this kingdom a part of their wool to be put to work; and the other to Flanders by treaty of the kings made and continued with the counts. The stop was at Bruges, a city formerly very rich and renowned for the manufacture and trade of drapery, indeed the capital of the country.

Also, whoever considers firstly the profit that comes from it, secondly the number of men, women and children who can be employed there, will suddenly conclude, according to necessity, that everyone generally has them, that in any well-regulated state, they must be very carefully maintained and preserved, without allowing them to be removed or diverted. For how can we retain the quality of good housekeepers, if we once cease to clothe ourselves with the

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

wool of our sheep, or if, allowing it to be taken from our hands, we receive it from others, fashioned with as much infidelity as makeup? At the very least, whoever buys three alders of French cloth to make a coat does not lose half an alder at the first rain. Whoever does not know that the English are giving him the gift and are putting him to shame has hardly been among them.

A few years ago, they brought some from a voyage and more than a hundred thousand crowns into this kingdom. It was arrested by the bailiff of Roien, at the request of the draper guards, and confiscated for being a victim and not conditioned according to the treaty of the Princes. Rightly so, it was said publicly in London, based on the rumor that spread. Through the kindness of our King, they obtained his release, a favor that in such a case we would undoubtedly never have obtained from them, since they maintain such strictness that the best drapery in France, brought to England, is confiscated and burned. Let us see next how they manage their misfortunes and turn them into advantages. To avoid falling into such a penalty, they seek and obtain permission to take away their merchandise, which is not deemed good and fair, without paying tax or duty, and thereby open up a means to deceive us and thereby defraud the King's rights. For, moreover, they do not stop selling and distributing it in open markets; it never crosses the sea again. Are we obliged by contract to allow ourselves to be deceived in this way? And until and for how long?

It cannot be denied that a large quantity of drapery is manufactured in France, but not nearly half as much as was made in the past. This is due in part to silk, which has become too fashionable among us. But the main cause, however, comes from the course that foreign merchandise takes there, and if it is not cut off, our rivers will become small streams and our brooks will dry up altogether in the end. We already know before our eyes how this misdeed is wasted. In a certain village of this kingdom, where more than four or five hundred thousand pounds were made, it is now not worth thirty thousand. Let us judge by the proportion of cities. We hear the people everywhere complaining about this domestic manufacture, that they are reduced to being idle and dying of hunger, for lack of work.

These examples already show the bad consequence of admitting it and the just reason to exclude it. But what will happen if the English, as they boast, obtain

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

permission from your Majesties to establish their manufacture in France itself? Truly, if this is the case, it is only to spoil everything. How much wiser are the Flemings, who for a few days have forbidden the import of cloth from England, having recognized that for this reason the work of their men was already beginning to diminish, especially in this respect for its ease, which is such that for four years up to eighty, all sorts of people, even the blind and the penguins, can be employed there and earn their bread.

The same thing happened a few years ago to a hundred from Hamburg, especially since the English did not want to use the men of the country in their trade, as at present they do not and do not want to do in France. Your Majesties are conjured to bring to all the above the order required by the very humble prayers and supplications of an infinite number of your subjects, by the tender sighs of women, by the pitiful cries of their children. Allow all of you to demonstrate together in all submission that their profession is the only heritage of them and their posterity; that apart from freedom they have nothing but this income; that, if foreigners wish to appropriate its use, they are doing no more or less than those who, through tyranny, would want to exterminate someone from their possession; that being born in France, it is right that they live there, which they could not do if the only means they have were taken away from them; that being destined to work, they must also be employed in that. The request of the people and their prince is useful, just and legitimate, which asks for the banishment of Power, mother of all vices, cause of all sins, which offers and subjects the authors to serve loyally for the good of his state, which seeks by his grace a reasonable order, by which they are made to enjoy the natural privileges, with which they came into the world and by which they can justly take advantage to the detriment of all others.

After woolen drapery comes silk drapery, or rather, it precedes it, as in price, in rarity, in use, in our luxury. To confess the truth, from it comes to men a great ornament worthy of a great state. The reign of Solomon itself read some recommendations of it. Also, it makes the spirit and wealth of a people shine, but this is mainly when they owe it to their own care, to their own industry, without drawing it by force of money, from foreign hands: for in this case, the cost should make them lose the taste for it. However, it is on the contrary for our eyes, because it serves as bait; it is an attraction to our curiosity. We have the opinion of being better dressed when we are more expensively dressed. I would

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

believe that this error could never be overcome in us, if we did not have the example of our King Henry II, who brought his entire court, and consequently the nobility of his kingdom, back to the first use of cloth in less than two years.

This proves to us the truth of these verses: "Commonly the subjects of a province, Forms its morals to the mold of its prince." Modesty is a beautiful virtue in man. It is the outward witness of a soul well composed within. It is true that it does not always depend on the simplicity of dress and that its brightest rays spring from our words, burst forth from our morals. Modesty, the faithful guardian of virtues, shines as well under silk as under the burlap. The mean and sordid dress is a monster of I know not what vileness. And without doubt it is a thing worthy of the care of a brave prince to provide for the honesty and kindness of the clothing of his subjects, following the example of Augustus, who, after having pacified the Empire, seeing the senators too mechanically dressed for his liking, made them regain a decorous propriety, a magnificence lioness and worthy of Roman grandeur. Also our great Henry, prince of immortal memory, after having by the valour of his sword raised the honour of this State, restored peace everywhere and re-established order in the provinces, took with him the design of making silk abound in this kingdom, so that his subjects could adorn themselves with it, with as much ornament, but less costliness than in the past, which without doubt would have been of little consequence to his satisfaction, to the good and to the honour of his people, if those, on whom his Majesty relied the conduct of this affair, could second with a judgment equal to his affection.

All that has come back to us of good is that the desire that it aroused in many to make the most of the profit from silk has produced the fruit that it now produces in Provence, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Touraine, Lionnois, Beaujolois and various other places in France, and more than four or five hundred thousand pounds; evident proof that it can provide itself with the best in the world, without buying it so dearly from foreigners. For as far as manufacturing is concerned, does not everyone know that for a long time we have had it in Lion and Tours? It has found the temperature of this city so mild and so agreeable, the people so ingenious and delicate in the handling of silk and so suitable for the food of worms, the soil so suitable for the production of mulberries, that one can judge how much more can be done there. And doubtless, if the royal hand had spread

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

its golden cloud there, from this arrogance it would have given rise to forests of sere.

Several considerations are required for the establishment of some artifice in some place.

Several observations are desired. Very often, failing in one, a well-begun design meets a bad end. The undertaking is not blameworthy, but the conduct. The good ploughman, before sowing his seed in the field, diligently searches for and recognizes the quality, in order to know which grain will be most suitable there; for not all grow well everywhere. And those who wish to build trees judge the soil by the wild shoots it produces, and by the plants that naturally grow there: for ordinarily apple and pear trees, oaks, firs, beech trees, and elms, do not find such a tasty ground. and not all kinds of vines bear fruit equally in the same vineyard. It is difficult to force the genius of a place, but easy to recognize it. It often grows certain seeds of its own accord, and gives in such a short time the natural testimonies of its fertility that the good manager, seconding it with his industry, sometimes draws from it a fruit greater than his hopes.

If we did not lose courage so soon in our designs, encountering some difficulty, if we had as much conduct and perseverance in managing the good artifices that we have in hand, as our nearest neighbors have, or, finally, if their example had as much power over us as it should, we would have made it appear long ago in this subject. Without doubt, if they had the convenience that we have for the climate and for the men, they would now provide us with an abundance of silk; Italy would do nothing more there, But for us, being such as we are or as we wish to be (for if we wanted we would be different), what use is it that all the gold and silver of Peru and Mexico comes to overflow in France, if this pump exhausts it and transports it elsewhere? It is up to your Majesties to advise on this; They have two great means at hand: either to prohibit the too frequent use of silk in this Kingdom, or to order and arrange the entire manufacture there.

However, your subjects will take the time to employ the industry they have and to take advantage of it; so much so that silk born, nurtured, and fashioned among them will become more abundant there than wool and hemp, than canvas and cloth. I need not say here how many people of all sexes and ages will derive exercise and profit from it. This will be easily imagined by anyone who knows the true appetites for luxury to which our nation is subject, and the passion it has

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

for beautiful and fitting things. It is to France itself that all artefacts, which must pass through several and diverse hands, belong: for, being, as it is, the country of men and of hard-working men, they can be completed there with more diligence and ease than anywhere else. The proof will be attested when your Majesties once put in their minds the desire to see it. The first flash that they will give of this affection will already be half of the work, at least for a long time since one has been beyond the difficulty of the principles; one must only continue the work and increase it in proportion to the necessity, in the places where it has begun.

It will be seen by this means well to the point that it will be desired. It is one of the greatest blows that you can strike for the good and utility of this State; for you will thus retain several millions who are transported there each year. Thus, so much gold and silver that leaves the hands of your subjects will return to the same water, perpetually maintaining the flow of this fountain of Hieron. A great artifice for the good politician, who seeks above all, in all, and through all, the profit and enrichment of his people! What I say about the manufacture of velvets, satins, and taffetas includes that of silk stockings for the same reasons. It is nothing but a superfluous and detrimental curiosity to the state, which makes us seek out foreigners. Those made in France must satisfy the French, just as those made in England satisfy the English. By ordering this, Your Majesties will bring great savings to your subjects, and at the same time, great profit. For it is said that for this merchandise, more than a million crowns leave your Kingdom every year. This excessive sum will not cause astonishment to those who cast their eyes on so many legs adorned with them, and for which such a large number are often required. This was not the case in the time of our good old fathers, when Princes and Lords rarely used them.

Now that time and the world have changed, I do not wish to blame the custom, provided that the benefit remains; otherwise it costs us too dearly. Moreover, that France can provide them itself is well known by the skill of making them with dexterity and promptness, which is practiced in the city of Rouen. When I spoke of the weaving of linens and of wool and silk drapery, I think, for the same considerations and similar advantages, I have concluded that all fustians and hawkers should be manufactured in this Kingdom, where the industry is practiced as much and better than elsewhere? Where the convenience is the same and possibly greater. For why should we be in need of others in anything,

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

rich as we are in and of ourselves? We speak among us of fustians from England and hawkers from the Island; but we are most often imposed by foreignness: for all or most of these fabrics are of the French fashion, and are no worse for it. It is in the same way that we are deceived by the lace of Flanders, which is not such in truth except insofar as the Flemings have it made and our women, and then resell it more expensively, using opinion as an attraction, to deceive our foreign name.

English merchants know how to take advantage of this common error over their compatriots. Every day they are heard crying out to the London lords: combs from France, garters from France, aiguillettes from France, belts from France, and so on, even though all these things are made in their own country and by themselves. It is for their own benefit that they show themselves thus grateful that we have taught them their properties, their use, and their method; for otherwise they would not do it, I assure you.

Noting here the more common and profitable arts that provide us with clothing, I must make a passing remark about dyes, which give them the various colors that we see changing in many ways every day. It is in this subject, as much or more than in any other, that the invention of the mind is exercised, in imitation of nature, which delights in producing in the world the different enamel of an infinity of flowers. Of all our senses, the most delicate is the eye. It is the least subject to weariness. The variety of objects pleases it; it carries itself with contentment from one color to another, maintaining and gathering by this sweet change the strength and vigor of its spirits. This affection of its passes to common sense and from there gives to fantasy, which, to please its principal rapporteur, lets itself go to what pleases it to the point of participating in its contentment, of the process, the state and the research that we make of paintings and dyes.

As for the look of the former, we have them only by voluptuousness; but as for the latter, they are now made for us as necessary by use. I don't believe there is a country in the world where clothing is produced that doesn't similarly practice it at some level. And no doubt the invention of coloring cloth followed closely behind that of manufacturing it. As for us, we have nothing to desire in this art. Our men have long since perfected it. Thus, it has always remained free and untouched to us until now, and the English, no longer content with bringing us

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

their cloth in white, still want to bring them dyed, although the dye they make is worthless at all, because instead of the woad we have, which they lack to stiffen their cloth, they use india, which has always been prohibited in France as the basis for an illegitimate and false dye. Your Majesties must never allow this, especially since it would lead to the obvious ruin of the dyers, who are more than sufficient in number in this Kingdom, whose loyalty would be forced to decline, and when the proper use of their dyes, especially since so many men who live and are employed under them would be reduced to begging, especially since this suffering would ultimately deprive the little exercise and profit that remains to the poor shearers, pressers, and other artisans, who work on the arrangement of cloth, which would be as much as depriving them of their lives.

For all the above, your subjects must beg your Majesties to grant them, through your authority, the means and power to use and benefit from their own industry, in such a way that the profit remains theirs; to not allow others to take the scythe to their harvest; as well as reason desires that each one works on his own funds and enjoys the fruit he produces and that we do not allow to die, for lack of gain, so many fine arts, which France has nourished for so long with profit, honour and contentment; in short, that we do not make this great, robust, and invincible body of state, crippled from its principal functions, by a torpor of cowardly and lazy idleness. Otherwise, what can we judge by the certain and indubitable prognoses that we see, if not that your subjects will all go and become mercenaries of foreigners; that their hands will be moved by them, and for them only; that if their work is enough for us, it will cease, because our industry will have become their slave and tributary, and they will no longer want to use it.

I think I have briefly understood everything that is used in men's clothing; all that is missing is the fashion, which in the time of our fathers was entirely in the hands of the tailors of the country; we alone carried the scissors that could disguise and change it as we saw fit. But now the Scots and Flemings have taught us our fashions. They cut and trim in the best of our cities; even with such ingratitude towards France, their wet nurse, that they would be very sorry to give bread to earn for her natural and legitimate children; for, except in times of great need, they only want to use the men of their nation. And, coarse as we are, we cannot learn the lesson they teach us among ourselves! We cannot learn it from our own people who have been among them! If we were skillful, we

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

would draw great consequences from these propositions, important conclusions from these principles. We would learn to live and to make our own people live: "Everyone's own is not too much"; that would be our maxim.

You forgot to mention tanning, an art as necessary as it is common, which, despite the great profit it brings, would not have remained as complete, as it has done until now, in the hands of the French, if those who practice it had not retained, mainly in the principal cities, free and clear ownership, by means of their exacting inspections, on the preparation of foreign leathers. This trade is among the richest in the kingdom, and the custom of so many men who use it makes it so. In recent years, it has fallen far from its goodness, both in its profit and in its work, the vice of which generally matters to all, and yet there would be a great need to reform the abuses committed there in various ways. This would save many illnesses, which come from the cold humidity that men suffer in their feet, for lack of good shoes.

The public is also interested in it, especially since the poorly nourished leather of bark in the plain and also not very faithfully cured, has neither the resistance to water, nor the duration that would be required. As for the moroccos, besides that there are very large numbers made in this kingdom, even enough to supply it, if those who pretend to bring us some did not transport them to their homes, there can still be made more, and better ones than in other countries of the world, who would want to choose the places; for we have skins in great abundance, and waters naturally good for that. These are the leathers that we have of ourselves for the most part; for the rest, it comes to us from Barbary, Cape Verde and Peru; but all of it is badly damaged by foreigners. Notwithstanding, I cannot go beyond this without marveling at how much leather from France and elsewhere can barely supply the three parts of the people of this kingdom, leaving at least a fourth which only uses wooden shoes or ropes.

The fashion remains entirely in our hands until now, although the Flemings are so frugal as to bring us their old shoes in full swing, not contenting themselves with coming to us to make new ones for us. It is because, as one might believe, that France has such a great need for shoemakers, that it is forced to call on them from overseas. It is well, at the very least, that we do not lack the

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

assistance of our allies, not in the least things. It is a great sign that they greatly love our property, that they are so eager to come and serve us.

PART FIVE
(ON VARIOUS OTHER ARTS)

Having spoken of what is mainly used for clothing, it is necessary in passing to say something about buildings. The insults of the weather, sometimes cold, sometimes hot, oblige us to cover ourselves with them and guard against them. It is nature herself, in love with her being and her preservation, that leads us to build and construct. We see how she teaches the wildest animals of the earth to withdraw into the cover of nests and gives the birds of the sky the invention of building nests. I believe, then, that houses have always been built, and this by a natural instinct. But simplicity has been added to convenience and finally magnificence. The care that our ancestors had of buildings, both private and public, has come down to us as if from hand to hand; and the need that we have every day obliges us either to repair the old ones or to build new ones. The great and wise Romans showed themselves so curious on this point that they had and observed laws concerning the location, the firmness, the form and the stages of the buildings.

Moreover, they had every year the election of a magistrate, who had the hand to make them well and duly practiced. Between us, the freedom to build is such as one wishes to take, provided that it is without prejudice to the right of others. For the materials of the buildings, such as stone, wood, lime, brick, etc. , and for men, such as masons, stonemasons, carpenters, plasterers, etc., I believe that there is a country in the world which is better provided with them than France. We know this more and more every day, from these great buildings which are undertaken and completed in such a short time that nature itself is astonished by the promptness and skill of the artifice.

Our excess is great in everything, and we would be very fortunate if it were brought back to moderation. Now, as well as formerly, we were treated with certain people, we can be reproached for building as if we were never going to die, and feasting as if we were going to die tomorrow. In truth, the latter is the work of a pig; but the former smells of its man. For undoubtedly, countries could not have more beautiful and more lasting ornaments than superb dwellings. Add to this, that in addition to the satisfaction they bring and those who have built them, many poor people are employed there for the relief of the people. When Alexander, after the conquest of Egypt, wished to build the city of

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

Alexandria and populate it with Greeks, he chose a site abundant in all goods and capable of feeding all kinds of people. An example by which Your Majesties can understand that caring for the comfort, wealth, and convenience of a people is truly a royal concern.

Speaking to Your Majesties of the principal manufactures of France, I would declare myself a sworn enemy of the sacred Muses if I were to pass over in silence the noble art of printing, by which the labors of so many learned men are brought to light and consecrated to the eternity of the centuries, by which we are instructed in all our duties, by which God communicates Himself to us and us to Him, by which we are given knowledge of divine and human things, by which we converse familiarly with all the greatest men of all ages, by which the memory of so many fine minds is preserved, by which we are praised in the future, if we do things worthy of praise, and by which you yourself must hope to be immortal.

It was a German, a native of Mainz, and so it is said, who first used this art in Christianity around the year 1400, at the same time as Berthold Schwarz, a monk and alchemist of the same nation, invented artillery, a true thunderbolt from hell, to the universal detriment of the whole world, as printing is to the utility, glory and ornament of all people of virtue. He first used wooden characters which can still be seen in Strasbourg with the first press from which he printed, which is, in perpetual memory, consecrated in the cathedral church of the place. Since then, as it is easy to add to things invented, metal characters have been discovered and put into use, from which the complete perfection of this art has come.

Thus we must confess that we owe it to Germany; but England and Holland also owe us the knowledge and practice they possess of it. Now that all Christian peoples are in possession of it, it remains to devise a means of preserving its maintenance and profit, as they all do in their respective places. The traffic in books is so great and so universal that it has not been disdained by even princes, and by entire states. Phillebert, Duke of Savoy, father of the one who now lives, a prince highly esteemed for the adequacy of his mind, knew how to accommodate himself so advantageously to this trade that the Venetians were moved to such envy that they never stopped until they had diverted him from

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

his hands, by an artifice which shows that in matters of profit there are few people who remain faithful.

Who does not know, moreover, how much convenience Germany derives from it, and that it makes the greatest and best part of its fairs? Also the Flemings, who have very delicate noses to sniff out any odor of gain, have hardly left this practice behind, but, having aroused it in several principal cities, employ all sorts of poor people of the country at a very low price, and oblige the journeymen to fifteen cents a day more than the French, who only derive twenty-five cents from it, making the crew do the composition. Thus, through this increased task, they have found a way to sell their work, which they send us cheaper—almost half—than ours can; and when they have decided to supply us with several books, which are more commonly used and therefore more readily available. This is how they deprive our printers and booksellers (in whose opinion our books are not the best or the best made, but those that sell best and fastest) of the ordinary exercise of their art and the mediocre profit they were accustomed to making.

I can say without exaggeration that there are fifty thousand people in your kingdom who work in printing and bookselling, who have no other means for their livelihood, no other income for their upkeep. As the mind is admirable in its various productions, it is so charitable towards its children that it tries, by means and with the help of this art, to preserve their life and duration with passionate care; it loves them, embraces them and looks at them with contentment, seeing imprinted there an immortal image of itself, with extreme pleasure; it remembers that they were conceived from the acquaintance it had with the beautiful and agreeable muses; then, as if by a reflection of the love of his own, he is brought to the love of others, who are born of the same divine seed, and in them, as in a mirror, contemplates the beautiful features and outlines of their authors, admires their perfection, becomes desperately in love with them, and from time to time gives them a few kisses in his study, from which, as if by a secret flame that he attracts, he is inflamed with the affection of virtue, honour, and glory.

To return to my subject, since printing has now passed from one nation to another, it cannot produce as much profit for those who practice it as it did in the past, when few people worked at it and among these peoples, few men. Add

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

to its more common use that, since the revival of letters, libraries have been stocked with books, so that there are always many left, although, through the ravages of wars, many have been consumed. This furniture is not worn like clothing: what was useful to the father can be used by the son, and so on from hand to hand, depending on the care taken to preserve it. I have no doubt, however, that if the import of foreign books were prohibited, printers and booksellers would soon become quite rich. And, to say freely what I think of it, this prohibition would only be for the good and salvation, both of those who govern and of those who are governed.

Foreign doctrine poisons our minds and corrupts our morals. A way has been found to degenerate many of our men, to delude them from legitimate obedience. Bad seeds have been sown in the tenderest hearts, the seed of Sodom and Gomorrah has been planted there; in short, monsters have been born in France that had never produced them before. There is no bookseller in the world, however opulent, who has a book of every kind; no wealth could suffice; no bond could contain so many. Also, the multitude of books is not good, even for use; those who misuse many usually make many guests and few friends; they seek to heal and bring their wounds to a scar through the diversity of devices; they deprive their minds too much and do not give them time to take root in a good foundation. But this discourse belongs elsewhere; let us return from where we left.

Good books are usually well received; and yet it would seem reasonable that, in the future, no privilege should be granted on first copies for longer than four or six years, so that, once the term has expired, the printing being free, everyone may share in the profit that can accrue from it. For, if the book is good, the one who first made it has certainly gained; if it is bad, it is not to be presumed that anyone would want to put it back on the press. And yet, should it no longer be necessary for your Majesties to grant extensions of privilege, at the whim and request of no one, especially since for a slight profit of eight hundred or a thousand crowns, which some can make from it, it costs more than a hundred thousand for all of France. If your Majesties still forbade the transport of paper outside the kingdom, if it were not printed, there is no doubt that the wealth of this art would increase greatly in a few years. For by this means the foreigner would be forced to carry our impressions and send here the copies that he would like to bring to light, which would give, besides the convenience of the country,

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

the knowledge of a large number of bad books, which are made to the detriment of your Majesties and the peace of France, with our paper itself, and the characters of our letters, which foreigners buy.

Thus, booksellers and printers, found seized with corrupt books, could claim no excuse; and the evidence would be brought to light immediately, especially since, firstly, the forms would be known, secondly, the paper and the year of its manufacture, especially since, at the inspection that the card-keepers make of them every year, something is added or diminished to the mark that the stationers take from their sworn guards. Moreover, all abuses of schedules and books are thus recognized, as are all assumptions of notebooks, by which several franchises are made, both in land and salt taxes and elsewhere.

What I have said about the card-keepers made me remember them. Before the English began to transport paper from France, they lived comfortably and supported a large number of men in their work. But, for some years now, they have had just as much to complain about as the other artisans of the kingdom. The English have reached such a point that we must now work through their hands, especially since they own paper mills in various places, which they have bought or had made, and to use them they bring in damask from their country, which they send there suddenly without any inspection, although, by the ordinances of our Kings, it is forbidden to use it unless it has first been in the countryside for six months, to avoid the contagions of plague and bloodshed, which usually come to us from Flanders and England. Poor Frenchmen, what more will there be to do, since we receive among us people who are so thrifty that they do not leave us even the profit of our pure and clean rags?

The fear I have that the English and Flemings will complain about our complaints, saying that they are only directed against them, obliges me to speak a little about the Italians. These men are truly subtle, full of invention; and from them we have learned many things. The same subject that attracts other foreigners to France has also brought them there and made them stay there. For some years now, they have practiced the art of glassmaking with good fortune and profit. It is not that it was not practiced in France before. From time immemorial, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Armagnac, the county of Foix, have enjoyed the kindness of this noble manufacture. I call it noble, in view of the hands that fashion it and the perfect essence of the material from which it is

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

fashioned, namely glass, which I can say, to put it in few words, is the miracle of artifice, as gold is the miracle of nature.

Our Kings also endowed them with fine privileges, and wanted only gentlemen to be able to exercise them in France; which is not the same in Italy. In several places in this kingdom, the people were for a long time content with fern glasses, and had the opinion that they could not receive from Venice without breaking; now that the industry and labor of the Italians have more commonly introduced the use of those made of Barille and called crystal, more polished in truth and more agreeable to the eye, but always as fragile, our French, lovers above all people of propriety in drinking and eating and of the nicety of their furniture, use them at this time ordinarily and with more pleasure. The desire that the late King, father and husband of your Majesties, had that the French alone should have both the practice and the profit of this beautiful art, has been declared several times by his own mouth, yet, as I thought, it was not known that more than two thousand five hundred gentlemen in his kingdom can derive comfort from it for their life and a maintenance worthy of their condition, without taking into account this other large number of men who are employed under them in this work. This is so considerable and affects so many people who bear this rank, that Your Majesties must embrace the affection of restoring them to their first and ancient rights that one wants to encroach upon them by some new privileges taken to their detriment, and without their having been called upon, since they have never been deprived of them by forfeiture or any felony, having their fathers, in the past, and themselves, in these last wars, without sparing their property or their own blood, courageously followed their prince and faithfully served this crown in all the places where the honour and duty of their rank have called them.

This is what I had to say generally about the arts and about some of the principal ones in particular, in which I did not wish to imitate the bouquets who visually select the most beautiful and fragrant flowers and weave and compose a work that is very pleasant to smell, but otherwise bears no fruit and lasts only a day; but I did like the bees who, flying over the roses, land on very strong and harsh thyme and rest there, preparing the wherewithal to make honey and wax. Moreover, I cease to pursue them and dissect them all in detail, remembering that I am speaking before Your Majesties, whose times should be hindered as little as possible. I would even fear being accused of having been too long in

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

this speech, if I were not well assured that you would measure it with its usefulness, which is almost infinite.

PART SIX

(ON EMPLOYMENT)

Then, on the other hand, God has ordained you for his lieutenants on earth to hear the poor, the widow and the orphan, as well as the greatest and the richest in the world; so that you always keep your eyes open and your ears alert to see and hear everything that can bring good and relief to the people. Also the greatest, most liberal and most magnificent princes have always prided themselves on inventing means, have always tried to imagine and draw up regulations, by which they can accommodate and enrich their subjects, knowing well that such wealth was the true and inexhaustible source of their expenditure and liberality.

After the care of having them administer justice, this one has taken the second place in their soul, as being itself a notable dependency, a principal accessory of its principal, which is to give back to each one what belongs to him. In any other subject, it has not had as much license as in this one to lower its hand and hold the reins loose. For the charity of the country restricts to its advantage and sometimes expands, according to the times and seasons, the limits of equity, and this is excusable by the consideration of the common good, to which the wise master of policy, who through good administration wishes to properly inform the matters of the Republic, accommodates himself in everything and in all things, especially since this is the general end to which both the laws of those who govern and the actions of those who obey must tend.

Human happiness, to speak of it in our style, consists mainly in wealth, and wealth in work. No more or less than all animals that have blood have heart, all countries that have wealth have industry. Industry, holding such a place there, must therefore be their first living and their last dying. And as the best disposition of the animal is that it be in all its dispositions according to the course of nature, so the best state of the State is that it be placed and remain in a certain and assured place, according to its usefulness, by its order, ruling among several and deriving from the one who commands those who obey. For without doubt it is a good fortune, when all the subjects have sufficient means for their needs or not having them can acquire them. It is the surest bridle to restrain this Typhoeus with several arms and several heads, which, when it gets angry and bored at not gaining anything, remiles and, by moving, sometimes excites

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

earthquakes. By this oil, the waves of this stormy sea, subject to all winds, which roars and roars below, are calmed, the first to be moved, and which is difficult to calm down, once the fury boiling in its waves has once overturned it from top to bottom.

As it is the greatest art of princes to know how to benefit the people, nothing brings them more obedience, more reverence, more blessing. We love primarily those who do us good; we believe that they maintain a natural bond between God and us, and judge, moreover, that the principal good comes to us from the gain we can make under their authority. Do we want an example of this without looking far? We have seen it in our own time in the Queen of England, on this occasion loved, cherished, and almost adored by her people. It must be confessed that her care and diligence mainly made her acquire knowledge of the arts of which she was ignorant, sparing with the best treatment she could the French who were thrown into her Kingdom in our troubles. She herself saw the fruit of it, and her country feels it every day.

I have said before, and I must repeat it again, that the employment of men and the knowledge of making them useful to the public and to oneself is a great trait of the wise politician; that to achieve this he must nourish, maintain and increase industry by teaching, by example and by exercise; striving above all to banish idleness among them, a fatal plague in rich and flourishing States, but on the contrary to attract them to work by the lures of honour and by the bait of profit. The English and the Flemish, our neighbors, teach us this. How one must regulate the arts to maintain and keep them in one's own hands, their example instructs us; as by their means no one who is capable of working can remain idle, their practice shows us this. I beg Your Majesties to consider, as the cities of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland have gone from small towns to large and admirable cities. It is because there is no way to be ignorant and lazy at the same time, and that men are sent early to Vescholl, ants and honeybees to teach them the cure for these vices, which are the greatest that man can have. If they do not want to practice the natural remedy, the magistrate will provide it, and himself will give them the medicine. Order that the same be done for your subjects, and your subjects will have the benefit, you the honour, and the public the benefit.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

The practices of the aforementioned countries are diverse, both for the learning and maintenance of the arts and for the employment and nourishment of men, but always tending towards the same end, namely, private profit and the common good. No one can claim any excuse for their poverty; for they find several means of freeing themselves from it, good and legitimate means, which your Majesties, moved by the public interest, must open and practice in this Kingdom, as is similarly done in all the principal cities of Switzerland and Germany, and indeed there is hardly a town in which the Lord of the place does not maintain some college to instruct his poor subjects, both in the liberal arts and in mechanical crafts.

We are all like bricks made from the same clay, but not all from a mold, not from an earth equally kneaded, worked, and, as it were, refined. As bodies are born more robust than each other, there likewise come here minds that are beautiful and rare par excellence. Your Majesties know well that the Lords of Turkey, Agas, Basass, grand viziers are not born, but are made and, as they say, of all sorts. If the laws and customs of your State, much better in truth and even more natural, especially since it is to be presupposed that eagles are born from eagles and doves from doves, do not allow you to do the same, at the very least they consent in this point with nature that the men who are born there are addressed to their end, namely to desire an ornament and utility to their country; not to be a burden like crippled and maimed limbs.

What I say of one sex, I say equally of the other; for both are born into society and destined for action. Also they share together the care and labor of the household, especially in France. If there are poor children there—but there are only too many of them because of the bad order, which has reigned among us for so long—one can, following the example of the Dutch, remedy this in two ways. The first is to gather them together and confine them to public houses, the boys apart and the girls apart, and make both work there in all kinds of manufactures, drapery, filling, linen, lingerie, etc. For there is no doubt that many of your subjects, who can provide for their upkeep or raise some company for this purpose, will very willingly undertake this course, when by prohibiting the importation of foreign works they will be assured of being relieved of those they can have manufactured.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

These houses of which I have just spoken are called by the Dutch "schools" and "good law" since one learns how to live there; those who are placed there are employed in various ways, well fed and well maintained. To distinguish them from the others, they are dressed in two colors, so that, if they go out through debauchery or otherwise, they are recognized and brought back. They are not taken from there except to marry them. When they learn a skill, they are taken to see girls who are born and governed in the same way to have them choose a wife. Then, giving them some money and some accommodation, they are allowed to go free, or to remain in the house where they were fed, raised, and educated, to continue their trade with good wages and salaries, which they receive from the society that supports them.

Here is another order that the same Dutch people maintain for the assistance of the poor who, eager to learn a skill, seek the means to do so. After finding a master in the city, they go and swear an oath before the magistrate to serve him well and faithfully for a certain number of years, giving them two sous, or six blancs per day, as agreed, without him being required to provide them with lodging or food. He gives them a free interval, from twelve o'clock until one, to ask and receive their meals, which they find and receive without leaving the district, especially since they have certain houses assigned, which feed them with leftovers and then cover them with clothing. This is to be understood only for the natives of the country; for it is not their custom to receive any foreigners, especially French, except in exchange.

Both these methods are excellent for employing those who are not poor, without being a burden to the State; and I am surprised that Your Majesties were not persuaded to do so when it was proposed to them to order that the beggars of this kingdom be confined by the cities and fed by public charity. Constantine was the first to issue ordinances for the subsidy of the poor, and in his time hospitals were established for poor children, for the elderly, and for the sick, at the request and insistence of the bishops, who complained, and with good reason, that crippled quaymen were passing by the temples, mingling their prayers and sighs with the chants of the Church.

Thus, it is true that the poor must be fed, not killed. Now, says Saint Ambrose, to refuse them food is to kill them. I would say more, it is sometimes to kill oneself: for the mistreatment of the poor often causes popular diseases in the

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

cities, and then they spread to the countryside through the contagion that is communicated far and wide. There is no better way to remedy all these evils together than to employ men, as I have said elsewhere, and as other peoples do, in various ways. For few, who look closely at it, will find themselves incapable of it. For those whose limbs are so mutilated by some great and sinister accident that they are even useless to themselves, or for those whom nature has produced only to serve as a burden to the earth, enough! The public will not be too burdened; there are not many of them.

As for those whose poverty causes weakness or infirmity, we have good provisions to restore them, thank God, and medicine can also provide a remedy. We take great care to cure them, and for this reason we often spend several months in the stable at the greater expense of work animals or carriages. Besides, do we want, for lack of exercise, to create new illnesses in them? Do we want them to contract bad habits through idleness with bad humours? I think that one cannot say as an excuse, except that there are some who are so unfortunate that they would rather let themselves die of hunger than put their hands to work. Lazy bellies, useless burdens of the earth, men born only in the world to consume without fruit! It is against you that the authority of the magistrate must be deployed! it is against you that he must arm his just severity, for you are the foils and the quills. It is from you that the cut-purses, the false witnesses and the thieves come! To such people one can bring just violence; one must make them work by task, as the Flemings do in the city of Amsterdam, the debauched men, rebels against their parents and lazy, to saw and cut brazil and other wood for dyeing, in a certain house, which they call Fechtus, where labour does some new miracle.

What I said above about the workshops which, in a well-ordered state, must hold the second link after families, since they must be nurtured and preserved, having engendered men who can and must be employed there, and about the manufactures which can and must be carried out, once well established, will soon become known by true experience as one of the greatest, most necessary, and most useful points of order that can fall within human understanding; and there is no doubt that your people, by the command and under the authority of your Majesties, will embrace its execution with a thousand kinds of blessings, because by this means you will have them celebrate, not once every year, but every day and at all hours, this solemn festival that the Persians called the death

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

to vices, in which they killed all kinds of snakes and wild beasts. Moreover, this public work will not spoil the individual: for it will only make up for his deficiency and will be assumed in place of that of the foreigner, which can only be admitted to the great detriment of the whole country.

Moreover, if the rule practiced in Holland could be introduced in this kingdom, without doubt it would be a beautiful thing and very favorable to industry and diligence. When some artisan has done a lot of work and cannot be relieved of it as quickly as his need requires, he takes it to the nearest merchant who deals wholesale, who takes it by weight or by measure, without asking for any reduction in the price for the workmanship. It must be said that this is a more equitable way of proceeding than we do. Each one, as we say among ourselves, seeks his own bargain. So charity demands that we not take too much advantage of another's disadvantage; that we do to him as we would like to be done to ourselves. It takes little to ruin a poor man; his sweat well deserves some rent: seeing himself deprived of a just and legitimate gain, he will undoubtedly tend to work illegitimately, which he cannot do without harming the public and very often himself.

Good and famous craftsmen are of great use to a country, I would even dare to say necessary, honourable, and yet the magistrate must take great care to make them and maintain them as such. It is of all trades that one can say what the great Hippocrates once said of medicine: "the art is long, life is short and the experience difficult." Anyone who is curious to observe its diverse and variable practices recognizes this. Science dwells among sweat, and the habit of good work is born of laborious exercise. One can acquire a house, an inheritance, a suit of clothes with money and appropriate them, but an art, only with time.

This is why I am quite astonished at the error that the letters of the Bull could have given rise to in this kingdom, by means of which it is permitted, by providing a certain sum, to profess any craft one wishes. Only three or four are exceptions, without having made it the masterpiece, not very often the apprenticeship. Your Majesties must forever suppress this abuse, by which ignorance, laziness, and the lack of interest in learning are all introduced together. If money makes all, what use is acquired arrogance? Who would not prefer to purchase an art at a low price than through so much vigilance and labor? Add to this that the artisans forged on this anvil are so many, who decry

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

and discredit not only the bond, but the province, but the kingdom. Fabrics and manufactures are often named after the place where they are made and where they come from. The public of the country itself has a great interest in this: for it is important for its good to be loyally served. There would be less loss and danger if deception could be recognized by the eye and touched by the hand; but ordinarily it is only discovered by use, and one is always disgusted by the appearance of the form and the figure.

But there is still another equally great evil; it is that the description of this deception gives day and opens the way to foreign manufactures, whose authors always strive at the beginning to do the best they can, except to relax into nonchalance, having acquired credit, which is the true and original cause of the abolition of arts in a country and the ruin of those who practice them. This is how foreigners have prevailed over us. This is how, over time, they have prevented our freedom of judgment, to our own detriment. This is how they have changed and diverted! From the springs from which we draw all our profit, and if our public fountain-keepers do not monitor them more closely, we will soon run out of water. What remains is in the troughs and gradually diminishes. When it dries up, let us make a point of drinking at the mercy of others. Thus, we will often be forced to quench our thirst with infected and muddy waters. Are we wise?

Having such lively fountains at home, if we are willing to clean them, who forces us to seek out stinking and stagnant cisterns, which even the owners do not allow us to use except insofar as they can do without them? Still, they must be paid tribute. But it costs me so little to be supplied; what business do I have to work? Is this excuse more cowardice or laziness? But furthermore, how prejudicial this is to the public can be proven by reason, and by example: for, to leave behind that very true saying that "one never has cheap bad merchandise," and such is for the most part, all foreign, - besides the fact that it is in the interest of the Republic that all be occupied with legitimate work and thereby turned away from vice, - we make as much loss as the foreigner makes gain. From what is bought and traded among our men, it is not so; one hand emptying itself fills the other, and it is like a transfusion from a full vessel into a void.

Besides, whoever wants to put the arts in good shape and maintain their reputation, must never diminish their profit by an excess of oil. The light goes

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

out in lamps when too much oil is poured into them. The excess of humour from a large ravine of water suffocates the sap of the tree instead of nourishing, maintaining and increasing it. It is a maxim among artisans that there is no worse charter than dead-gain; and this is mainly where it comes from. Besides, nothing disposes people more to emotion than the necessity that comes to them by such an excess, which is very often more formidable than too much ease, another ordinary occasion for uprising. The wise politician must prudently invent ways to ensure a just and temperate balance between too much and too little, so that no inconvenience arises, either from deficiency or from excess. He must imitate nature, which never lacks anything necessary, to which nothing superfluous is ever redundant. For lack of work to do, the craftsman languishes and dies of hunger; too much work done prevents him from earning, and this leads to grief and very often despair.

PART SEVEN

(CONCLUSION)

All things considered, there is only one good and legitimate way to remedy this inconvenience: that the country provides for the country. The body has members to perform bodily functions; states have men to serve them, and they must also be employed for this. The practice of all the others sufficiently instructs us how great observers they are of this great point of policy. Let us leave Germany and Switzerland aside, and take as an example England, which is closer to us, indeed all the more willingly, as it is almost indebted to us for all its industry in matters of fireworks. Since, by the establishment of various trades, it has been able to do without all foreign manufacture, it has so controlled what is not brought into its country that everything that can be discovered there is confiscated, and those who are found seized are condemned to heavy fines. I knew one of our men from Rouen, living in London, who, thinking he could make something from the haberdashery he was sneaking into (for that from France is highly esteemed there), in the space of two years found himself thrown into prison more than twenty times, so much so that in the end he was forced to leave this business and the country itself; for this is never done with the English; one always drags one's bond there. They have certain officers whom they call promoters, to whom the search and knowledge of this is entrusted, whose vigilance is so great that it is very difficult, or rather impossible, to avoid him.

I will not speak here of our Flemings; they are so diligent that they leave nothing to do for the natives of the country where they are introduced; what housekeeping, then, could one do in their own house? It is right, it is natural equity, everyone must cultivate their own land; each country must feed and maintain its people. Its fruits should not be like those of fig trees, planted on mountain precipices, of which only passing birds eat. Since they can be picked by hand, they also belong to their owners. The title of heredity sufficiently forbids them. Our great apostle truly recommends us to do good to all, but especially to the servants of the faith, from which we learn that there are degrees in charity itself, which, being a reflection of God on all creatures, must consequently be universal, but that our affection must nevertheless first embrace the usefulness of our citizens, who are, as it were, allied to us by a right of consanguinity.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

Whoever would question the savages themselves on this subject, they would reply that nature, having given each land its men, has properly and particularly attributed to them the use of the elements and goods that it produces. This is why I am now beginning to relent from the vexation that I once felt within myself, seeing our men so neglected in England and Holland that they were unwilling to employ them for their own expenses alone, however good artisans they might be, when they wished to spend some time there to learn the language; and this all the more so since I recognize that these people do not do this as a reproach for any natural cowardice and laziness, which is the case with the men of our nation, more industrious on the contrary and more hardworking than any others, but as by a public edict and political concert, no less useful to the country than acceptable in any good government.

In all the cities of this kingdom, I recognize only Lyon where the similar practice is practiced more or less. For it is not permitted to those who keep a shop, workers or those who do work, to employ any man from outside, to the detriment of the one from the city who asks for work. I have even learned that foreigners are forced by the native companions of the place to leave every three months, that they make their visitation to let others who present themselves enter their places. It seems very reasonable that each city has something particular and as if in reserve, for its own children, so that it can do well for them. That, I say, has the privilege of employing and maintaining them first and before any others; since it itself is responsible for their care and expenses, in case of poverty, natural or accidental indisposition.

To add that it is at once contentment and glory to enjoy and to be delighted with the fine minds that she has produced and as if nourished by her breast, to derive pleasure, service, and profit, from the industrious hands that she has seen to produce and fashion the manufacture of various works. Who doubts that John of Montreal, in the time of our fathers, did not honour the city of Nuremberg with his eagle and with his fly? As formerly Architas Tarentum with his dove? And Archimedes, Syracuse, with his admirable mechanical engines?

So it is, to tell the truth, a great pleasure to see oneself useful to one's country, honourable to one's friends, agreeable to one's prince, for some great and rare quality, more active than contemplative. The beautiful mind takes pleasure, is

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

pleased, glorifies itself in communicating, like another sun, the rays of its light and in making several participants in it. Moreover, those are undoubtedly the true men, who surpass others in the knowledge of the beautiful and useful arts, since the arts are the principal marks which make men differ from the brute animals. There are beautiful, great and strong minds in this kingdom more than elsewhere. One must only uncover the grapes hidden beneath the vine. As bodies facing the sun, beating and reflecting the light that illuminates them, increase and clarify it further, men of merit and industry, by receiving the favors and benefits of their prince, give more brilliance to his generosity, more light to his virtue, more splendor and reputation.

Your Majesties must be careful not to give any other reward to good actions than a good conscience; the reward is great indeed, full of contentment and satisfaction to oneself; but men are men, and it tires them in the end to do well, when they receive no other reward than good doing. It is therefore necessary to employ gallant men, and with reward, which they will manage of their own accord, by themselves, in your kingdom, when you give them the right to exploit it.

Otherwise they are rough diamonds, which do not shine, or, to put it better, they are as if they did not exist. Their light is hidden under a bushel; their talent remains buried in the earth by constraint. Beautiful souls have, in truth, several ways of opening and producing themselves outside. These stars shine in darkness; but the best and most palpable is action; and for action one must have the opportunity: this is what awakens them.

The Prince himself must offer and give it to them; this is what encourages them. Without the siege of Syracuse, would anyone have known how far this Briareus went with a hundred arms and a hundred hands, I mean Archimedes? I can no longer contain this truth, it escapes me; allow me to say it under your good grace: formerly it was seen that the spirit was worth something, but now it is considered less than nothing. The most divine thing in the world is not, and a thousandth part, so highly esteemed as the vilest excrement on earth. This is the vice of the century; repair it by your virtue, and if you want to see wonders performed in your age for the benefit of your subjects and to your honour, which is the best part of it, give free rein to these spirits of whom I speak, and let foreigners make room for them.

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

The capacity of the same vessel cannot admit and contain two bodies together; one must yield to the other. When the liquid enters, the air escapes. You can: it is in your home; the command brings with it the necessity of obeying. When you have them alone and free, you will not be a little annoyed. You will soon recognize this and judge that the light of the sun is more beautiful, sweeter, more pleasant and, to say it all, more profitable than that of the moon; that the latter only refreshes, but that the other produces, engenders, gives being, nourishment and life. Then, quite at ease, you will be able to introduce, for greater utility, among your own kind, this emulation and desire to do well, without which action always remains cowardly and weak, no less than a ship reeling at sea when the wind fails it. The legislators have understood this well, mixing in the establishment of their police forces the jealousies of citizens. For not only in poetry, he who, as the divine Plato divinely says, is enamored and ravished by the inspiration of the muses, will make any other worker, however laborious, exquisite and diligent he may be, appear worthy of contempt; but also in the arts, this affectionate ardor to conquer and surpass is invincible and inimitable, adding like a sharp and poignant spur to the desire to win the prize.

The Dutch, who, as I remember having already touched upon elsewhere, have proven in several ways, mainly over the last twenty-five or thirty years, that necessity gives a great deal of wit and invention, know how to take advantage of both points that I have just discussed; and, because in matters of great actions it is necessary that the public hand helps the private one, as soon as someone of interest, recognized as a man of labor and judgment, wants to demonstrate and establish a useful industry, asking for this purpose from the States some convenient position, he obtains it when and when, without the length causing him to fall into languor; when and when he has the reasonable privileges to assure himself of the fruit of his invention, and is never defrauded under the pledge of public faith. Thus we should not be surprised if industry makes greater efforts there than among us; because the most kind minds, the most well-to-do men of wealth and fortune, take pride in seeking and profiting from finding some ingenious and useful artifice, by means of which the arts more commonly and more necessarily in use can come to an easier practice, to a more prompt expedition; from this they reap great fruit, especially since by means of engines and tools of mechanical invention they infinitely relieve the labor of men and consequently reduce the costs of the work, which allows them, rather

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

than great abundance or the diligence of artisans, to give us goods at such a low price.

It should be added that now that they are in possession of supplying us, they do not aim so much to do well as to do a lot, and that their industry is employed and deployed more to make up the works, to sell them better, than to make them good. Not only customs, but the laws of peoples change, according to morals and the times. This is why Solon, after the publication of his own, would not bind the Athenians by oath, except to keep them for only one hundred years; which gives instruction in two things: that one must not make eternal laws, nor also change them suddenly, for the nature of human things, like that of the body, is marvelously slippery and continually going in precipice, from good to bad and from bad to worse, and vices flow little by little, as bad humours accumulate insensibly in the human body until (if one does not evacuate them by often repeated purgation) it becomes sick.

Also the reason of the State is not always one, any more than that of medicine. To new ills, new remedies. The pilot does not always steer the sail in the same way to reach the same port. Government considerations change, and so do the councils: one way today, another tomorrow, as necessity requires. Formerly, our France, without working so hard to amass foreign wealth, lived happily and contentedly, but then. Now, since morals have changed, every artifice must be deployed to bring in money. The rule of all this is the preservation of the State and its citizens; the safety of the people is the supreme law. When a dictator was created in Rome, he was told everything in a single word: that he should ensure that the Republic suffered no harm.

It was also held as a maxim that it was more profitable to keep one citizen than to kill a hundred enemies. There was no reward so great or so honourable as for this: a seat in the Senate, a place in the theater, honour everywhere, exemption from all taxes and contributions, not only for the person, but, for love of her, for her father and for her paternal grandfather. This is the reason: whoever helps the Republic by advice or by deed is worthy of being honoured and rewarded by the Republic. The arts nourish men well; but honour nourishes the arts.

Now that the State can have nothing more advantageous than their diverse industry, nothing more useful than their diligent and different practice, nothing

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

more agreeable than their ingenious variety, nothing more honourable than their alarming multiplicity, I believe that no one will wish to doubt it; for it would be easy to convince him by proofs so evident that they would speak for themselves. It is found in writing that Cato, having undertaken to ruin Carthage, against the opinion of Apius Claudius who judged and maintained that work was more useful to Rome than rest, coming to the Senate, expressly brought in the reply of his robe some African figs, which he threw, shaking them in the place; and, as the senators were weary of seeing them so beautiful, so large and so fresh: "The land," he said, "which bears them, is only three days sailing from Rome."

But, if it were necessary to persuade your Majesties of the preservation of the arts which are our principal need, I would like, practicing quite the opposite, to come and display before your eyes the beautiful, the rich and useful productions which they make in all the seasons of the year, winter and summer, and to tell you: Here are the fruits of your garden; see that they are flowering and keep well; judge if the trees that bear them deserve to be well maintained; they are not like those, which some years give a lot of fruit, and some others not at all; it is always a similar fecundity, a similar fertility; several things oblige you to take care of them; firstly, they are plants born in your soil, not grown, nor introduced from elsewhere; and their offspring, having taken root so well and fructified in strange soils, what will they do in their own and under their same sky? Distill only on them the sweetness of your graces and make them like the sky, which spreads the gracious humidity of its rains as well on the thin of the gardens and on the twisted vines as on the tallest fir trees. Even if you took no other pleasure than to see them flower and bear fruit, that would still be human; but the need that all places, all men, all times, all ages have for them must lead us to love them, cherish them and preserve them carefully; for reason shows you this, necessity teaches you this and nature itself prescribes it to you; for it would ultimately be necessary for the dissolution of your State to follow, if the forces by which it is supported were diminished, wasted and abolished.

There are things that appear small, which, being neglected as minor, do not attract a small consequence, but are the cause of many inconveniences in a country, and sometimes weaken and impoverish it completely. One can make such a state of them as one wishes: but the arts are undoubtedly the lime and the cement which join and bind to the building of the Republic the parts which are dissimilar in nature, which without this means could not have a lasting

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

consistency; justice is spread and dispersed in all them in pieces, just as blood, in which the spirits of life are contained, flows in streams in all the veins and arteries; one could not offend a single one without violating it. They all belong to humanity and are all held together by a common chain, composed of several links intertwined one in the other, and the chain can be in the hand of the sovereign master of police, this golden chain, which Jupiter boasted of being able, when he wanted, to draw the sky, the earth and the sea to himself. It is with these links which have soul, and are capable of mutual functions that the peoples are joined.

Also, as the political philosophers hold that public vacation is nothing other than an action by virtue, to which all private vacations tend and relate, no less than all the spokes of the wheel to the hub, the sources to the rivers, the rivers to the sea, also mechanical vacations are industrial operations, which compete with the public, in which they are arrested and confined, and all under the direction of the magistrate, who brings them to its end; no less than in the construction of a building, the architect, having regard and authority over the laborers, employs them variously according to his project.

I think I have, through the preceding speeches, made Your Majesties aware of how necessary it is, for all sorts of reasons, to employ the men of this kingdom, how useful it is to entrust them with the exercise of the arts, and how important, to achieve this end, to prohibit the importation and use of foreign works. Let no one persuade Your Majesties that your tributes, taxes, and duties will diminish by prohibiting foreign manufactured goods that come into this kingdom. There are a thousand ways to disinterest yourself, without trampling on your people, either on the merchandise or on the work. Besides, the wealth of your subjects is yours, not that of foreigners. Consider this carefully and you will approve of all the means of reaching the point desired of you.

I firmly believe that Your Majesties are sufficiently inclined of their own accord to undertake all things beautiful, great, and glorious. If I would now, for the service of my country, be capable of inventing everything that can entice and awaken generous souls and, by a lively and effective persuasion, compel them to consent to the achievement of some great work, I certainly do not spare it in this matter. All I can do is to represent to you that the principal reason why the position Homer calls Agamemnon shepherd of the people is all the more so

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

because, just as the good shepherd must take care of the maintenance and feeding of his flock, which includes rams, ewes, and lambs, so too must the honourable prince take care of the safety and comfort of his subjects, great and small.

It is to beg you to imitate in this place the Divinity, which gives being and preservation, as much to small things as to great, which works as curiously to compose and preserve a small bee as a large eagle, to form an ant as an elephant, to make, however small it may be, all its organs more ingeniously constructed, more artfully elaborated, more clearly hollowed out, more miraculously arranged than those of the most vast and prodigious animals of the earth. It is to conjure you by all the wishes of our most humble servitude to deploy your authority and your royal force to the accomplishment of a thing where virtue, honour and utility are together united.

Even if you should encounter difficulty, - which I do not see, - this should not prevent you from courageously putting your hand to the work, since it is so significantly a matter of the glory, the grandeur and the comfort of this Empire, both for the present and for the future. All the great figures, whose examples we have and follow, could be content to live for themselves, without working for others; but a certain augury of future centuries, being attached to their soul, made them take resolution to embrace with difficulty and fatigue the care of the public. Otherwise, if they thought they would see their reputation terminated by the same limits of their life, would they have wanted to suffer so much? Great souls strive principally for immortality. These celestial flames reach there; these rays of light want to be reinvigorated and their sun, these sewers of life want to return to their source, these atoms of divinity desire to rejoin their unity.

What we foresee, moreover, and conceive in mind, that posterity belongs to us in something, makes us attempt what is as much for its good as for our own honour. Thus our mind, standing somehow on tiptoe, looks to the future, albeit from afar, and, foreseeing the benefits and satisfactions that its prudence will produce there, savors them and feeds on them in anticipation, judging that this life that moves our body and is contained in our arteries is not our best life, but the one that glory must maintain in immortal vigor throughout all the centuries. There are no better natures in the world than those who believe they are born, given, and destined to serve, maintain, and defend others; also the honour which

BOOK ONE: MANUFACTURING

is born of is not a shadow, but is something solid, express and really subsisting, which produces among men a uniform law and full of divine pleasures, which spreads and resounds from mouth to mouth, like a voice extended and multiplied by the echo of reputation, bearing witness to virtue.

Even the pagans, who have some sentiment of true good and some knowledge of true honour, have thought that there was a certain place of reserve in heaven, to receive after death those who, during their life, have helped, adorned and increased their country. According to this judgment, the truth of which is, for indubitable certainty, confirmed to us by our own belief, we are all bound to use all our power to deserve well both those with whom we live and those who will survive us. Now, for your sake, you cannot achieve better and rather your happiness than by doing something whose usefulness can be shared by many, both inside and outside this kingdom, imitating this beautiful star of the sun, which does not illuminate only the hemisphere which sees it, but also a large part of that which does not see it.

This great instinct of nature, which first inclines us to your own good, then to the affection of ours and of those who depend on us, must solicit you to this action; but, above all, this profound discourse of your divine reason, which, referring to all directions, could not invent any better means, to make you embrace all offices and duties of piety at once, to make you practice in a single stroke all kinds of virtues, to make you love and admire during your days and after your days. Let therefore no other spirit beat in your veins; let no other fire penetrate your souls than the movement and the ardor of this affection alone, if it would be for nothing other than the love of divine love and of Christian charity!

If the contentment that produces a mortal and common glory so often puts off the delights of work, will you defer employing time and trouble to acquire an immortal and incomparable honour? Courage then, most Christian Majesties, perfect this distinguished work in your days, signalize by it your reign. This point must be a great occasion for you to undertake; that the field where you work is yours, and all the fruits that will be born there consequently; and that in this kingdom so great, so beautiful, so populated, you can make your wills powers and your thoughts actions.