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# XX.5 On peoples who have engaged in commerce of economy

- The Spirit of Law - Book XX. On laws in their relationship with commerce, considered in its nature and its distinctions -

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## XX.5 On peoples who have engaged in commerce of economy

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Marseille, a necessary retreat in the midst of a stormy sea ; Marseille, that place where all the winds, shallows, and coastal configuration make it obligatory to drop anchor, was frequented by seamen. Its barren surroundings predetermined its citizens for commerce of economy. [1] They had to be hard-working to make up for unforgiving nature ; they had to be just in order to live among the barbarian nations that were to make their prosperity ; they had to be moderate, so their government would forever be tranquil ; in short, they had to have frugal ways in order always to live by a commerce which they would more surely preserve if it was less advantageous.

Everywhere we have seen violence and vexation giving rise to commerce of economy, when men are forced to take refuge in marshes, in islands, in the shoals of the sea and even in its reefs. That is how Tyre, Venice, and the cities of Holland were founded : fugitives found their security there. They had to live ; they drew their subsistence from the whole world. [2]

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[1] Justinus, book XLIII, ch. iii.

[2] [Added before the next chapter in the edition of 1758 is a chapter corresponding to [Annex 9](#).]