

“merchants one of the articles of their *national* liberty^r.” But indeed it well justifies another observation which he has made^s, “that the English know better than any other people upon earth, “how to value at the same time these three great advantages, religion, liberty, and commerce.” Very different from the genius of the Roman people; who in their manners, their constitution, and even in their laws, treated commerce as a dishonorable employment, and prohibited the exercise thereof to persons of birth, or rank, or fortune^t: and equally different from the bigotry of the canonists, who looked on trade as inconsistent with christianity^u, and determined at the council of Melfi, under pope Urban II, *A.D.* 1090, that it was impossible with a safe conscience to exercise any traffic, or follow the profession of the law^w.

THESE are the principal prerogatives of the king, respecting this nation's intercourse with foreign nations; in all of which he is considered as the delegate or representative of his people. But in domestic affairs he is considered in a great variety of characters, and from thence there arises an abundant number of other prerogatives.

I. FIRST, he is a constituent part of the supreme legislative power; and, as such, has the prerogative of rejecting such provisions in parliament, as he judges improper to be passed. The expediency of which constitution has before been evinced at large^x. I shall only farther remark, that the king is not bound by any act of parliament, unless he be named therein by special and particular words. The most general words that can be devised (“any person or persons, bodies politic, or corporate, &c.”) affect not him in the least, if they may tend to restrain or diminish any of

^r Sp. L. 20. 13.

^s Ibid. 20. 6.

^t Nobiliores natalibus, et honorum luce conspicuos, et patrimonio ditiores, perniciosum urbibus mercimonium exercere prohibemus. C. 4. 63. 3.

^u Homo mercator vix aut nunquam potest Deo placere: et ideo nullus christianus debet esse

mercator; aut si voluerit esse, projiciatur de ecclesia Dei. Decret. I. 88. 11.

^w Falsa sit poenitentia [laici] cum penitus ab officio curiali vel negotiali non recedit, quae sine peccatis agi ulla ratione non praevalet. Act. Concil. apud Baron. c. 16.

^x ch. 2. pag. 154.