

reasonable gains for the freight of the same.

If, therefore, English ships could not be got, or if the owners demanded an unreasonable freight, foreign ships might still by law be employed.

PART I.

42 ED. III. TO
A. D. 1351.

FROM these concessions and qualifications it is seen how early our ancestors felt, that these beneficial regulations, with all their advantages, contained in them the inconveniences and mischiefs of a monopoly; and that the navigation and shipping of the country could not be favoured without exposing its trade to some degree of burden and restraint. Indeed it will be found, from the wording and tenor of various statutes made on this subject, that the Acts of Navigation were regulations more of a political than commercial nature; and that the whole advantage to be derived therefrom was intended to center in the navy of England. We shall find, in all subsequent regulations, that the object in view is the increase of ships and not of commerce, and that the interest of the latter is made frequently to give way to that of the former.

THERE appears to have been no statute on this subject from the reign of Richard II. till the reign of Edward IV. when it was enacted by stat. 3. *Edw.* 4. c. 1. among other regulations respecting the trade of wool; that no person inhabiting within the realm of England; other than merchant strangers, should freight nor charge within the realm any ship or other vessel of any alien or stranger with merchandize to be carried out of the realm, nor should bring any into it, if he could have sufficient freight in the ships or vessels of denizens, on pain of forfeiting the merchandize,

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