

scrupulous than the Commons. The duration of the Bill was still farther limited; it was reduced from ten years to seven, and in that form was passed. A subsequent application was made to Parliament for a renewal of this Act, but without success, and the Act had never since been renewed. Was it not evident from these facts that the company themselves acknowledged the invalidity of their charter without the confirmatory Act, and that after the expiry of that Act the charter must be considered invalid. Subsequently in the year 1749, the complaints addressed to Parliament against the company were almost universal. Petitions were presented from Chester, Newcastle, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster, Kendal, Whitehaven, Bristol, Carlisle, Wakefield, and other commercial towns. They prayed for freedom of trade within the jurisdiction of the company. They impugned the charter. They complained that—

“ An important trade was locked up in the hands of a few to the detriment of the many ; that the company only employed a few ships, to the detriment of the nation ; and that the company had made but few settlements, and those mainly of their own hired servants, every public benefit being neglected.”

A Select Committee was appointed, and reported facts fully confirming these complaints, which were all couched in language applicable to the present state of things. But the matter was dropped. Financial embarrassments were not peculiar to the present times. It was felt that a supercession of the charter would have cast on the public the duty and the expense of governing the country. England was not rich enough to do what was right