

apart from the width of its scope. For instance, the act of Queen Elizabeth, which in 1566 incorporated the Russia Company, contained a similar provision, 'for the better maintenance of the navy and mariners of this realm.' But it was memorable as making a beginning which, after the Restoration, blossomed into the mercantile system. Under that system trade dictated policy; the Empire was looked upon as a single unit; the colonies were regarded as dependencies of the Mother Country; free trade and cheap Dutch carriage were barred, though greatly valued by the colonies; and baneful uniformity became the standard colonial policy of England. Dr. Rawson Gardiner found in this law of 1651 the beginning of an inevitable reaction against Puritan idealism. 'The new commercial policy,' he wrote, 'did not profess to have other than material aims. The intention of its framers by the nature of the case was not to make England better or nobler, but to make her richer.'¹

¹ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* (1894), vol. i, 1649-51, p. 83.