

reason why the treatise had not been published in his lifetime. Contrasting his own countrymen most unfavourably with the Dutch, he spoke of the 'lewd idleness' of his fellow-citizens 'of late years besotting ourselves with pipe and pot, sucking smoke and drinking healths.'¹ It seems strange that this was written shortly after the Petition of Right in 1628, at a time when the strife between King and Parliament was beginning, when Puritanism inspired by religion was gathering strength and men of the type of Winthrop were for conscience' sake crossing the Atlantic and making their homes in New England. It is well to be reminded that even in the middle years of the seventeenth century religious and political activities and antagonisms were far from covering the whole field or absorbing the whole life of England, and that with those who were concerned in commerce and who managed the affairs of trading companies trade was the dominant consideration. Mun had the highest admiration for 'the industrious Dutch,' whose provinces he described as 'the magazines and store-houses of wares for most places of Christendom,'² and he discerned, as did others afterwards, that they were the rivals whom England had most cause to fear. His banker friends in Italy, he wrote, wondered why Spain and France only should be regarded by Englishmen as their enemies and the Netherlanders embraced as their best friends and allies, 'when in truth (as they well observe) there are no people in Christendom who do more undermine, hurt, and eclipse us daily in our navigation and trades, both abroad and at home.'³

¹ Pp. 178-9.

² P. 183.

³ Pp. 204-5.