that owing to the demands of the king the merchants were being ruined and their mariners driven into other trades. The size or measurement of ships was assessed on the basis of their capacity to carry tuns of wine, the first step in the present system of tonnage measurement. Ships sailed in fleets, one or more of their masters being appointed admirals, to be obeyed by all the company. In times of special maritime disturbance an armed fleet convoyed the merchantmen, much, no doubt, to the added cost of transport. The great source of England’s wealth was her wool, of which the abundance and fineness gave rise to a wide demand. Staples or licensed entrepôts or marts were set up for this and other produce at certain towns in England and overseas, English merchants associating themselves at such foreign staples. In like manner foreign trading societies located themselves under certain privileges and obligations at English marts, to the great increase of ship- ping, more especially of foreign bottoms. About the middle of the 15th century a considerable use sprang up for shipping in the carriage of African slaves to Portugal, their captors being the Moors. In later years this melancholy trade found large employ­ment for the ships of Liverpool, Bristol and London, trading with the distant west. Pilgrimages, too, were bringing profit to the ships, a constant stream of the devout with their offerings journeying on the one hand to the shrine of St James of Compostela and on the other to that of St Thomas of Canterbury.

From times remote the fishing industry produced a hardy race of shipmen, the maritime nations being all more or less engaged in an enterprise rendered doubly lucrative by the want of flesh meat and the regulations of Holy Church. Thus in very early days the northern seas were thronged with rival fishing fleets, which, from about the middle of the 15th century, began to find their way to the banks of Newfoundland. At the close of the 16th century the whale was being pursued by rival fishermen on the Greenland coasts. Queen Elizabeth, for the maintenance of shipping and the increase of fishermen and mariners, forbade the eating of flesh on Wednesdays and Saturdays, an order from time to time subsequently revived. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his statement to King James, lamenting English commercial supine­ness as compared with the enterprise of the Dutch, declared that *20,000* vessels of all nations were engaged in fishing off the British coasts, of which vessels the Dutch owned 3000; and no doubt they formed a valuable mercantile and naval school.

The great discoveries of the renowned Spanish and Portuguese navigators in the reign of Henry VII. awoke in the maritime states a new spirit of commercial enterprise and emulation, in which Henry and his successors took an active part. A royal grant of navigation and discovery was given to the Cabots, then settled at Bristol, and “ divers tall ships ” of London, South­ampton and Bristol traded direct with the Mediterranean ports, though the English merchants generally employed foreign vessels for this trade. A “ tall ” ship was apparently a vessel carrying topmast with yards and square sails, an important development of the simpler pole-mast rig of earlier times. Henry VIII. and Ferdinand of Spain entered into a league, primarily aimed at France, under which it was agreed to police the seas in protection of their shipping, the English fleet to watch the sea to Gibraltar, and Spain to guard the Mediterranean. The Corporation of the Trinity House was now established, in great part for the deepen- ing of the Thames and to supply shipping with the ballast gained in the process, though the vessels actually London-owned were apparently few in number. Most English ships of hurthen were then obtained by purchase at the South Baltic ports, where the great Hanse town, Lübeck, was the centre of an enormous trade. The Hanse towns, indeed, practically carried on the trade of England. In the time of Elizabeth, England began to achieve commercial independence. Great building of ships took place, for which bounties were granted by the queen, and Eliza- beth set herself against the Hanseatic league. At the close of her reign the Steelyard was shut up, and the Dutch were compet­ing successfully with the Hanse towns, of which “ most of their teeth were out and the rest but loose.” In the early days of commerce the risks were too considerable to be borne by individuals, who accordingly associated themselves as companies of merchant adventurers for the purposes of their particular trade, exclusive rights and privileges being granted to them by their own sovereign, and corresponding facilities on the part of the foreign states or cities traded with. In England certain of these societies, notably the company of Russian merchants, the Turkey merchants and, for long, the East India Company, occupied positions of influence and importance, the last-named company especially becoming possessed of much shipping, including large vessels, well armed, for prize-making or defence. The needs of trade and shipping were for long but little under- stood and often arbitrarily obstructed, but as a broad general principle it was recognized by the crown that the national trading interests required for their protection special privileges and concessions. Thus the patent granted by Elizabeth to the African adventurers in 1588 was expressed to be on the ground that “ the adventuring of a new trade cannot be a matter of small charge and hazard to the adventurers in the beginning.’’

At the middle of the 16th century Antwerp was at the zenith of its great prosperity. It was described as the general store­house of the world, and it was stated that so many as 2500 vessels might he seen lying in the Scheldt at one time. These, however, were mainly foreign, Antwerp being a mart or emporium to which other nations traded. Towards the close of the century this great city’s peaceful population was, in the name of Holy Church, crushed under the iron heel of Christian Spain. Its traders fled from cruelty and torture largely to Amsterdam, about this time the northern entrepôt for Portugal’s East India trade. The Hollanders, profiting by the decline of the Hanse towns, were now greatly devoting themselves to shipbuilding and to foreign trade. They, like the English, hampered in their navigation by hostile and unfriendly occupation of the ports of refuge and supply at the two great southern capes, were bent on discovering a north-east or north-west passage to the East. This enterprise and the desire for gems and precious metals, as to the existence and abundance of which there were many false beliefs, added greatly to the knowledge of the distant seas and shores, on which many settlements were being established. To such settlements the attention of the French was now directed, with much encouragement to their shipping by the powerful Richelieu. The East Indian settlements and shipping of the Portuguese were being persistently harassed by the advancing Dutch, while the rich treasure ships of Spain were laid wait for and captured by English shipping, greatly to the Spanish loss. But the Dutch especially were prospering. Amsterdam, a vast trade centre supplied by Dutch shipping, had between 1571 and 1650 trebled itself in size. So far back as 1603 Sir Walter Raleigh, in his statement to King James, had complained that the vessels of the Dutch, by reason of their greater capacity and smaller crews and consequently lower freights, were cutting out the English ships or driving them into the Newcastle coal trade. By such enterprise the Hollanders gradually became the carriers for the English merchants. English bottoms were neglected and English seamen took service with the Dutch. Affairs for English shipping had about 1650 reached a crisis. There existed, moreover, great animosity between the English and the Hollanders.

In the defence of the national shipping the great Navigation Act was in 1651 placed upon the British statute-book. Under this far-reaching act the trade between England and her colonies and the British coasting trade was strictly confined to English bottoms, English owned and manned substantially by English seamen. The act contained further provisions in support of British shipping, the effect of which was greatly to prejudice foreign shipping in its competition for the British carrying trade. It is not impossible that some of the regulations of the act may have proceeded from the animosity already mentioned (Adam Smith). From the point of view of the Dutch, indeed, it was a “ vile act and order,” to be resisted at all costs. From the prolonged hostilities which ensued England finally emerged supreme at sea. For some time the French, under the powerful encouragement of Richelieu and