

ENGLISH AND DUTCH AS ALLIES AND ENEMIES.

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IT has ever been the habit of England, when conquering the Dutch, to sweep the board, and having annexed their entire possessions overseas, to stand in



MICHEL DE RUYTER.

some embarrassment in the face of her conquests, and finally hand them back again, on one occasion accompanying the gift with the douceur of a round six millions, conferred for what reason it would be hard to say. We are not to-day at war with the Dutch; for to name Paul Kruger and the Silent William in the same breath would be an insult to the House of Orange of which only a Boer should be capable. But our own diplomacy is evergreen in the face of what enemy soever; and the Boer of to-day, though a caricature of the de Wittes and van Tromps of earlier days, preserves,

none the less, though in a coarsened and exaggerated form, enough of the characteristics of the ancestors of whom he is the degenerate descendant for it to be worth our while to remember how England has dealt with Holland in the past. On the present occasion we need hardly fear, even for our diplomacy, for we have a Secretary of State who is reputed to know precisely how many shillings go to make the pound sterling. Moreover, we are fortunately backed by Colonial Governments—Governments which are not in the habit of making presents except to the Mother



CORNELIS VAN TROMP.

Country, and who will assuredly send in their bills and see that they are promptly settled.

But as touching the question of Dutch



THE ENGAGEMENT OFF THE NORTH FORELAND, 1666 (ENEMIES).



THE ATTACK ON CHATHAM BY THE DUTCH IN 1667.

and English as friends and foes, let it not be forgotten that before England and Holland expanded into ocean-empires, it was as often as not Holland that was the victor. It is only when the days of the Ruyters and Tromps are already a century old that it becomes historical to write of the English habit of conquering Holland. De Ruyter was not a noble; the "particle" in his case is merely the definite article, and the name by which he is known is

de Ruyter appeared chiefly as a diplomatist; there was no fighting. But in half a dozen conflicts we learnt to our cost what Dutch seamanship was like; and in the year 1667, when the Dutch sailed up the Medway, England was as near to seeing the capital menaced as she has been at any time since the Conqueror entered it. In those days England and Holland were fighting for the empire overseas; and as a consequence of the



THE ACTION OFF BEACHY HEAD, 1690 (ALLIES).

a nickname derived from his schoolboy exploit of climbing a steeple and riding on the weathercock. In those days he was only a ragged urchin, playing on the quays of Amsterdam. He had for play-fellow a little African friend, who returned to the West Coast and rose to be head of his tribe. His tribe lived near Goree, just where the fever begins; and when de Ruyter, now the great Admiral, captured Goree from England in the year 1664, the two friends foregathered after a separation of fifty years—the Dutch Admiral and the African chief. At Goree

war, which contained so many disastrous episodes, we at least acquired New Amsterdam, better known as New York. New Amsterdam was rechristened after our sailor Prince of those days; that same Prince who—*quantum mutatus ab illo*—was twenty years later to flee before the Dutch at the Battle of the Boyne.

Southwold Bay was James's best day. His fighting qualities were undeniable, and he had some tincture of naval strategy. Certainly he was far superior to his cousin, Prince Rupert, and if below Blake, was equally above Monk with his idiotic

"Wheel to the left!" when he wanted the helm put down. The Duke of York's victory culminated in the blowing-up of the *Eentracht*, which flew the flag of Admiral Opdam.

It was van Tromp who, in justifiable pride at having defeated Blake, hoisted a broom at the masthead to intimate that he had swept the English from the seas. Must we give up this story, like so many others that we like to believe? It appears that we must; and, indeed, van Tromp's despatches are those of a very modest man whom we can hardly imagine indulging in the fanfaronade ascribed to him by tradition. The Dutch Government, if Government it can be called, corrupt, niggardly, and inefficient, had reduced the fleet so low that in the Cromwellian wars de Ruyter had flatly refused to go to sea. It is hard to say which was the more corrupt—the Dutch Government of the Cromwellian wars, or the British Government under Charles II. Yet so much depended on personal prowess that, provided the fleet could only get to sea, it was sure to give a good account of itself. Thus, only a year before the guns



JAN EVERTSEN.

of the Dutch bombarding Chatham were heard in London, the British fleet could give so good an account of itself as the Battle of the North Foreland.

But it is not good to dwell on these fights. Both England and Holland had fought the good fight of freedom against Spain, and it is painful to see the two



WITTE CORNELIS DE WITTE.

great defenders of liberty fighting Titanic battles with each other for trade reasons. Van Tromp was killed fighting against Monk; de Ruyter was slain in battle off Messina—he died (strange irony of fate!) a Spanish Duke. Not more pleasant to contemplate is the Battle of Beachy Head, where the English, nominally allied to the Dutch, deserted their friends in the battle and left the victory to Tourville. But for once the fate of England was not decided on the sea; and the victory of Beachy Head was useless to the King, who fled before the Dutch at Boyne Water. Before we take leave of the seventeenth century we must not forget Jan Evertsen, the companion of van Tromp, and Witte Cornelis de Witte, fiercest and most feared of Dutch commanders, who in vain attempted to take the place of de Ruyter.

The eighteenth century opened, bringing with it memories of Neerwinden and Steenkirk, where English and Dutch had faced defeat together, and ushering in the War of the Spanish Succession. Herein it is hard to say

whether the courage of the Dutch or the imbecility of their Government is most to be marvelled at. But of all their joint

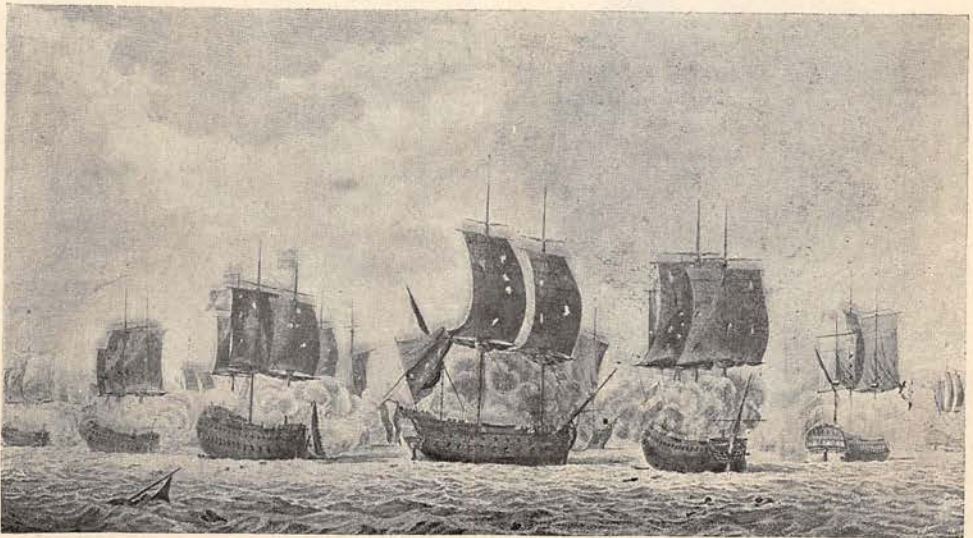
tend, this fierce rivalry of England and Holland, and the still fiercer resistance of both to France? What were we fighting



THE SIEGE OF LILLE BY THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH (ALLIES).

achievements none stands out more forcibly than the capture of Lille. And now, we may ask, to what does it all

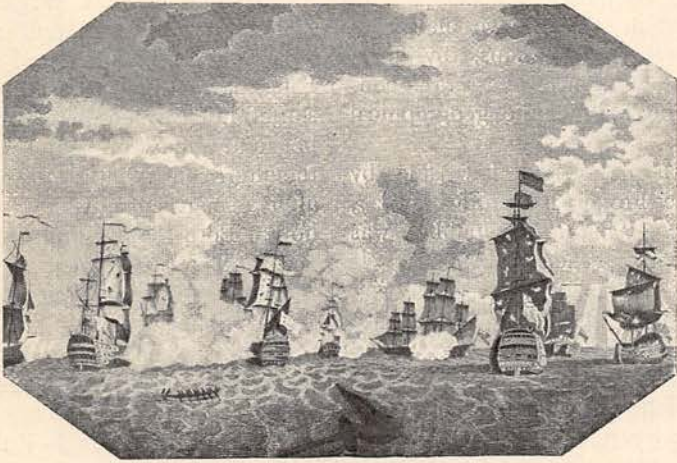
for, and who gained by the result? We were fighting for the command of the sea, and its consequence—a colonial empire.



THE ACTION OFF THE DOGGER BANK, 1781 (ENEMIES).

Holland dropped out of the running as regards the Atlantic shores; and, leaving France and England to fight their century-

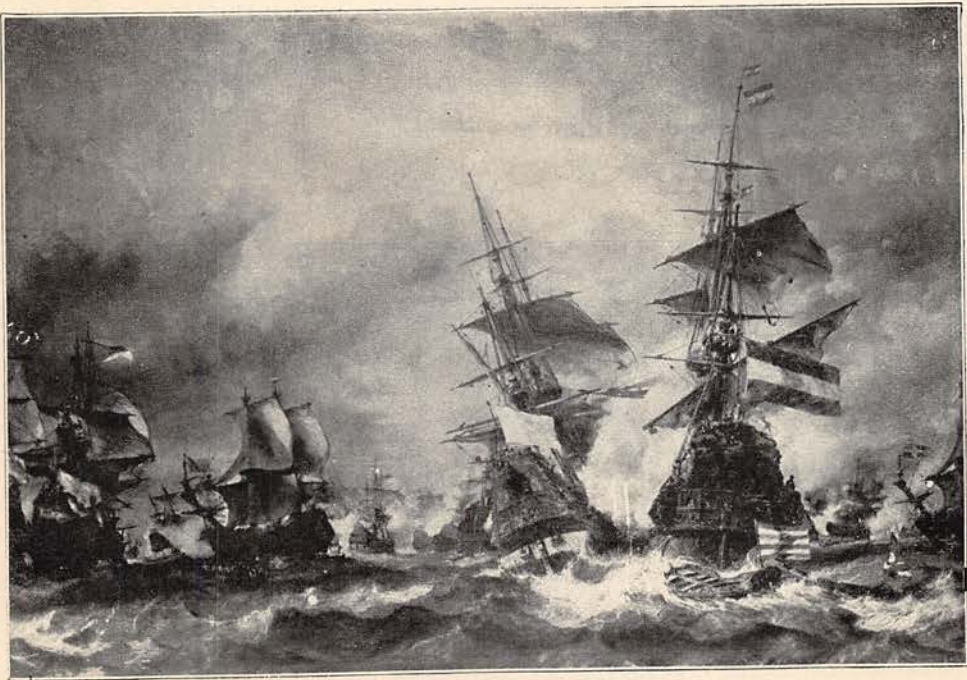
that France was left with no empire at all. In order to remedy this disaster, France twice annexed Holland with all the Dutch



THE DEFEAT OF THE DUTCH OFF CAMPERDOWN, 1797.

long duel, contented herself with the Far East. The net result of the duel was that England was shorn of half her empire, and

dependencies; once under the Republic, and once under the Empire. The Dutch, not unwillingly, became our enemies.



THE SECOND ENGAGEMENT IN THE TEXEL.
From Isabey's Painting in the Luxembourg.

They fought us under the French flag at the Cape and at the Moluccas, in Surinam and Curaçao. There is a ship in her Majesty's Navy at the present moment whose name celebrates our conquest of this island with the festive name a conquest forgotten, perhaps, by most of us, Curaçao — like Angostura — conveying anything but definite geographical ideas.

The Dutch flag, then, flew side by side with the French flag from Jan. 27, 1795, when the "Batavian Republic" was founded, till the Peace of Amiens. It is with but a melancholy satisfaction that we can recall the uninterrupted series of victories of England over Holland that marked this war, as well as the war that followed upon the promotion of Louis Bonaparte to the crown of Holland in 1806. But though fighting against every tradition that had made their country great, the Dutch fought gallantly. The occasions when we were well matched with the Dutch were light squadron or single-ship actions and fleet actions. The capture of colonies was comparatively humdrum work. The action in the historical waters of the Texel fought on Oct. 23, 1798, is a good example of single-ship engagements. In point of fact, it was one ship against two; the

British ship being the frigate *Sirius* (thirty-six 18-pounders). The *Furie* carried thirty-six and the *Waakzaamheid* six guns. Captain King, of the *Sirius*, caught them separated by two miles of sea, tackled the *Waakzaamheid* (a corvette) and captured her. The *Waakzaamheid* only fired one gun; and King, having put a prize crew on board, started in chase of the *Furie*. The chase began at nine a.m., and lasted till five in the afternoon, when the *Furie* surrendered after a smart engagement lasting half an hour. Both ships were added to the British Navy; the *Furie* being rechristened the *Wilhelmina* to avoid confusion with the *Fury*, and the *Waakzaamheid* (of which our Jack Tars must have made wonderful work) sailing under her Dutch name.

Better known than this little fight is the great battle of the Texel or Camperdown, fought on Oct. 11, 1797, the great fleet action which made way for fights like that of the *Sirius* and her two enemies. All that England retained of her first conquest of the Dutch Empire was Ceylon; all that she retained of the second conquest was the Cape of Good Hope, for the retention of which we paid six millions sterling; so that the existing Dutch Empire is a free gift, twice over bestowed by England on Holland.

