England in North America would have to be fought on the St. Lawrence. After the success of Holmes' expedition, the French were hemmed in between the English in the Atlantic States and the English in Hudson's Bay. They were probably right in turning on the weaker foe first. We have seen how they fared; but before we consider the result of their attempt to master the English settlements on their southern frontier, we may with advantage trace the history of their other great outpost, the colony of Louisiana.

La Salle's expeditions were, after all, little more than 'pointers.' When D'Iberville took up the work of his predecessor he was himself practically rediscovering the Mississippi. He was not sure that he had found it until he fell in with some Indians, who showed him a relic of La Salle's expedition —a prayer-book. D'Iberville was an active man, and covered a great deal of ground during his short stay in the colony. His two great fears were either an attack by Spain from the islands, or an attack by the

English from South Carolina. South Carolina was at that time the most southerly of the English colonies, but the English there made no move towards molesting the French in Louisiana. The Spaniards did send an armed force with hostile intentions to the mouth of the Mississippi, but, finding the French colony stronger than they expected, they contented themselves with a protest, alleging the prior claims of Spain, founded on De Soto's wanderings one hundred and fifty years before.

D'Iberville's great work was the foundation of Mobile. He died in the year 1706. In the year 1708 the total civilian population of Louisiana numbered 157, including women and children. As in Canada, so in Louisiana, the French were most reluctant to settle down to the labours of agriculture. Every immigrant expected to make a fortune, either by pearl fisheries or by discovering mines, and there were incessant squabbles among the colonial authorities, if that is not almost too large an expression.

In the year 1717 the colony seemed about

to take a new lease of life. The dominion was transferred to Law in perpetuity, with exemption from taxation for twenty-five years, and many trading privileges. From 800 to 1,000 immigrants landed, and in 1718 New Orleans was founded. Two years later came the collapse of Law's scheme, and a new period of depression for Louisiana. In 1732 the province became a royal domain, and in the same year a most menacing event took place, an event that, as we shall see, had most far-reaching effects, in that it roused the government on the St. Lawrence to new efforts—efforts that in their turn alarmed England, and brought about the expulsion of France from North America. Governor Oglethorpe founded the colony of Georgia.

So far as Oglethorpe was concerned, this was purely a benevolent undertaking; and as a benevolent undertaking it received generous support in London. But it also received Government support—for reasons not exclusively benevolent.

In the year 1732 South Carolina, the

most southerly of all the North American colonies, was still exposed to dangers arising from the jealousy of Spain.

Georgia, which was to lie south of South Carolina, would be an effective buffer against these attacks, and an annual grant of ten thousand pounds was voted in aid of Oglethorpe's project by Parliament in consideration of the obvious political advantage of strengthening our settlements on the Atlantic coast by the foundation of a new colony.

In so far, then, as Oglethorpe's action had any political meaning, it was directed against Spain and not against France. But France could not help weighing, very seriously, not only the present action of the English, but also what that present action portended in the future. It was now just fifty years since La Salle had discovered that the Mississippi emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, and since the scheme had been struck out of connecting the colonies on the St. Lawrence with Louisiana by the valley of the Ohio. During that fifty years the French had done

almost nothing towards the realization of their ambition. A few stockades, strong enough to protect the defenders against a surprise by Indians, and called Mobile or New Orleans, and held by a few score soldiers and as many civilians, represented France in the valley of the Mississippi.

As for expansion eastwards to the Atlantic coast, there had been no attempt to do anything of the kind, for excellent reasons—there were not men enough. And now the French beheld themselves forestalled, and the English frontier extended to the latitude of Louisiana by means of a colony occupying the very ground that in their dreams the French had marked out for themselves. Moreover, the colony was not of the kind that the French were accustomed to found. It speedily showed an amount of 'spring' and self-reliance that was hardly surpassed by the French colonies on the St. Lawrence that had been in existence for a century. It actually attacked the Spaniards; and, though defeated in the attack, had strength enough to repel very gallantly the return assault.

A pushing, belligerent settlement of this kind was the last sort of neighbour that France desired in her southern colonies. The most disagreeable possibilities opened out; and it was determined to take seriously in hand the policy so long academically adopted as desirable, to shut the English off east of the Alleghanies, to line the Ohio and the Mississippi with forts, and to occupy those forts in force, and turn them into colonies by emigration from the older settlements as occasion served.

Activity on distant frontiers had not served the French well. In the extreme North the English, far from being expelled from Hudson's Bay, were more firmly established there than ever. In the extreme South the French not only had effected next to nothing with their colony of Louisiana, but saw themselves, as they supposed, menaced in their turn. There remained nothing but to try conclusions on the St. Lawrence; and here the chances were much more in favour of the French than they probably realized. For the English policy

in Georgia and Hudson's Bay was controlled by the Home Government; whereas in the New England colonies the Home Government was at the mercy of the Provincial Assemblies.

The genius of the company of men who drafted the Constitutions of the United States half a century later has caused us to, in a measure, overlook the performances of the Provincial Assemblies at the time we are now considering. They showed no political capacity whatever. They were quarrelsome, exacting, and incapable. They not only showed no patriotism: they jeered at patriotism. Besides being incapable, they were disunited and mutually jealous. Accustomed as we are now to the vigorous statesmanship of our self-supporting colonies, to their forward policy, their magnificent self-reliance, their noble emulation in material progress, their pride in each other's achievements, their not infrequent chafing at the action of the Home Government, which they look on as leisurely and timid, it is with some difficulty that we realize that in the middle

of the eighteenth century the situation was reversed. It was the Home Government that desired to push on, the Home Government that urged the danger of disunion, the Home Government that exhorted and implored the Provincial Assemblies to rise above a policy of sixpences, and take a view of politics that had, at any rate, some glimmer of statesmanship in it.

This state of things was the grand opportunity for the French. Their own colony was well in hand, and its policy firmly directed. Although greatly inferior in population to the English settlements, the latter were disunited, whereas Canada was one. Against the Home Government they could make no way—might they not succeed against the Provincial Government? The chance was a good one.

Their serious efforts commenced in the year 1747 with the appointment of Count de la Galissonière to be Governor of Canada. We must put out of our eyes the vast extent of the North American Continent, and endeavour to realize the comparatively small

area in which France and England fought out their great struggle for the domination of the whole. Heavy were the blows given and taken by the two rivals before the battle on the Heights of Abraham closed a struggle that had lasted twelve years, from De la Galissonière's appointment in 1747 to the fall of Quebec in 1759.

Cape Breton, which (as the Duke of Newcastle was so astonished to learn) was an island, was French ground since the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Nova Scotia was English, and had been so since the Treaty of Utrecht. Canada did not extend practically beyond the extreme westerly point of Lake Ontario, which was guarded by Fort Niagara; the easterly end of the lake was guarded by Fort Frontenac. The colony of New York claimed the southern shore of Lake Ontario, and had a fort, strongly held, at Oswego, in the middle of the southern shore. Montreal could be approached up Lake Champlain, which was closed at the north by Fort Ticonderoga; to the south of Lake Champlain, on Lake

George, the English held Fort William Henry. Quebec was supposed to be unapproachable by the St. Lawrence, owing to the difficulties of navigation.

It was in this narrow arena that France and England thrust at each other during twelve years.

France may be said to have drawn first blood by the acquisition of Cape Breton, which gave her the commanding position of Louisburg—a very strong fortress. Six months later England founded the city of Halifax. This was one of the very few official colonizations by England. It was admirably effected and entirely successful. The close of the long war with France had thrown numbers of men and officers out of employment; and these men were emigrated to Nova Scotia and settled at Halifax. They numbered no less than 2,576 souls, and, being good material originally, they quickly took root and rapidly multiplied. It was a severe blow to France; for one of the chief points of the policy of De la Galissonière had been to re-acquire Nova Scotia, and so join

Cape Breton to Canada. The foundation of Halifax strengthened our grip on Nova Scotia; so, turning aside from this part of the French plan of conquest, the new Governor, De la Jonquière, without loss of time, followed up the principal aim of his predecessor and turned to the Ohio.

Both De la Galissonière and De la Jonquière were distinguished sailors, and the former is famous in history for his capture of Minorca. In Canada he had laid down a forward policy for France in every direction. He took his policies in geographical order, beginning at the North with Hudson's Bay; here he did nothing. Halifax checked his plan of absorbing Nova Scotia; there remained two projects: to push down Lake Champlain into the heart of the English settlements, and to dominate the valley of the Ohio. Before giving over charge, he had formally proclaimed the sovereignty of the French King over the whole of these regions, and had openly announced his intention of securing the line of the Mississippi down to Louisiana.

Eight months after the foundation of Halifax, De la Jonquière took up this line of policy, and formally called on Governor Clinton of New York to forbid English subjects to trade on the Ohio. The Governor returned no reply ; English traders persisted, and De la Jonquière consequently had them arrested and sent to Montreal. From this year the French went on from success to success. The arrest of peaceful English traders was nothing less than an outrage ; but it was not likely to be resented by the kind of public opinion which was all that the English governors had to work on, and no move was made for three years. In the meantime, Fort Duquesne was founded, and the colonial borders were harried ever more and more by French Indians. The French got on very well with natives at that time ; it is an art that they appear to have lost.

But they seem to have owed part at least of their influence to the license they allowed to the Indians. License to Indians in the hour of victory meant permission to

burn, torture, and outrage their captives; the French allowed this.

The horrors of Indian warfare were an old-standing terror. They might have been suppressed as between French and English, but the French thought that harrying our borders was good policy. De Vaudreuil in particular insisted very strongly on its good effects. The question of humanity apart, it is probable that De Vaudreuil was wrong.

The new menace was the foundation of Fort Duquesne. This place, on the eightieth parallel of west longitude, at the junction of the rivers Alleghany and Monogahela, commanded both these rivers, and also the Ohio, which rises from their confluence. The Alleghany gave access to the French colonies, and the Monogahela, less readily, to the English colonies. The fort was named after the Marquis Duquesne, who had come out from France to be Governor of Canada in the year 1752, with definite instructions to drive the English out of the valley of the Ohio. It was completed in

the year 1754; the net was fast closing round the English settlements. They made an attempt to break through—the attempt known to history as the disastrous expedition of General Braddock. A considerable armed force was directed on Fort Duquesne; it was defeated with great slaughter, and Braddock lost his life.

The French cause was clearly in the ascendant; it was time for England to strike a return blow. She struck it in Nova Scotia. This province had been English ever since the Treaty of Utrecht. It was largely populated by settlers of French extraction, who had been treated with the utmost indulgence. It is hardly credible, but is nevertheless the fact, that for forty-two years they had steadily refused to take the oath of allegiance to the English King. We overlooked their attitude, only inviting them from time to time to re-consider it. We even allowed them exemption from taxation, in the hope of winning them over by this moderate treatment. It was in vain; and it appears quite certain that their rebellious

state of mind was largely fostered (grievous though it is to say) by their priests, every one of whom was a political emissary, and continually dangled before the eyes of his flock the hope of being one day reunited to Canada. In the meantime it was their religious duty to make things uneasy for England, and to hold out the right hand of fellowship to their brethren in Cape Breton, who were still French subjects. They succeeded so well in their exhortations that the English Government in the year 1755, driven to desperation by the very grave aspect of affairs in the American colonies, came to, and acted upon, a stern resolution : the plague spot must be cut out.

For the last time the oath of allegiance was tendered ; and on its being refused the entire French population, numbering some six thousand souls, was deported from Nova Scotia and scattered among the different New England colonies. Orders were issued to the different Governors to take steps ensuring that the expatriated families should not be permitted to reunite in any one place.

This was our return blow for Braddock's defeat. Nova Scotia, with the new settlement of Halifax thriving and prospering on the western coast, and with all the French malcontents expelled from the eastern coast, now became a solid wedge of English soil, driven in between the French in Canada, and the French in Cape Breton. The Home Government, by this vigorous action, had retrieved in the north-east something of what had been lost by Duquesne's action on the Ohio.

But France had at last realized that her grand opportunity was in the disunion of the New England States. Our action in Nova Scotia was, for the moment, a heavy blow; but if her own main action succeeded, and the English could be shut up between the Alleghanies and the sea, Nova Scotia would matter very little. Accordingly, she pursued her policy with ever-increasing vigour and success. In the summer of 1756 the Marquis de Montcalm, the new Governor of Canada, attacked and captured Oswego. Immense stores fell into his hands, with £18,000

sterling in silver, and over 1,600 prisoners. Oswego was razed to the ground; and Lake Ontario, with its two ends guarded by Forts Niagara and Frontenac, became a French lake. Montcalm spoke with contempt of the English resistance. The English in the New World, he said, were very different men from the same men in Europe. The colonies made no return blow, watching with sullen resignation the dominion of the continent passing from their hands.

The French pushed on, and in the next year, 1757, gained yet another victory. This time they followed up the third line of De la Galissonière's policy, and struck on Lake Champlain. Fort William Henry was captured, and the French allowed their Indian allies to commit frightful barbarities on the defeated garrison. The end of all things seemed at hand: Ontario was gone, the line of the Ohio was gone, and the French had pushed on into the very heart of the New England settlements. It seemed to be not so much a question whether the English should be shut up between the Alleghanies

and the sea, as whether they would be permitted to remain in the continent at all, except as French subjects.

It was the brightest hour of the fortunes of France. It was not only that the acquisitions of France were brilliant and important: it was the complete demonstration of the impotence of the colonists to resist the French attack that was so full of promise for the French cause. Only a conjunction of four events could now wrest from France the exclusive dominion of North America: firstly, that the mother country should come to the help of the colonies; secondly, that the help should be not only substantial, but overwhelming; thirdly, that the general in command should be, not some Court favourite, like Hill, not some incompetent senior, like Whitelocke, but a picked man, for the emergency was appalling; fourthly, most important of all, that the English should have learnt the lesson that the French had learnt, and so skilfully turned to such important results—viz., that instead of tapping at outlying posts, we should strike at the heart of

the French dominions, and at one blow conquer or be conquered.

All four conditions were fulfilled, for Pitt was the Minister, Wolfe the general, and Quebec the point of attack. On July 28, 1758, Louisburg fell. Between 5,000 and 6,000 French were taken prisoners; Cape Breton was ours, and the way up the St. Lawrence was open. But the lustre of this great achievement was dimmed by the news of yet another French victory. In attempting to throw back the French from their point of vantage on Lake Champlain, Abercrombie was heavily defeated at Ticonderoga with a loss of 2,000 men; George, third Viscount Howe, who is commemorated under the north-west tower of Westminster Abbey, was among the dead. Pitt was greatly depressed; for only a few weeks now remained in which to operate before the St. Lawrence was closed by the ice. Te Deums were chanted in the churches of Quebec in thankfulness for the victory and the approaching triumph of the cause of France. They were shortly to be succeeded by Misereres.

The victory of Ticonderoga was the last gleam of success that gilded the arms of France. Stung by the repulse, and determined to drown in action the fatal depression that had fallen on the spirits of the colonists, Bradstreet obtained leave to make yet one more attempt to threaten the French on the St. Lawrence. The expedition of Wolfe still delayed to attack, and we had sustained a bloody defeat on Lake Champlain; perhaps a move might be made on Lake Ontario.

On August 29 Fort Cataraqui (by Fort Frontenac) fell to the English. It was the first of a long series of successes. A fortnight later Quebec itself fell: Wolfe died, but Montcalm died also, and a blow was struck at the heart of the French settlements that left them prostrate. Early in the winter the dreaded Fort Duquesne was approached and found deserted. It was occupied by the English, and re-christened—in commemoration of the mighty genius who had inspired the whole campaign—Pittsburg.

In the next year Ticonderoga and Crown Point fell to Amherst, and Montreal to

Murray. Nothing remained to France but Louisiana—the *fons et origo mali.*

So ended the empire of France in North America. The French had a plan; the English had none. The French plan was perfectly feasible; it only failed because it was unsupported. Daring though the scheme may appear of connecting, in those early days, the settlements on the St. Lawrence with the Gulf of Mexico, there was nothing really insuperable in the obstacles to be overcome. Fort Duquesne, for example, could easily have been built fifty years before the date of its actual foundation, at a time when the English had not crept far from the coast. In the rather feeble and cross-grained temper of the Provincial Assemblies there would have been found no centre of opposition to this move; and the 'Protectorate'—to use the modern word—of the French being once recognized diplomatically, there could have been no opposition in Europe. 'Pegging out the claim' would have been even easier at the other end of the line; for the English were so far off that protests from them would

have been ridiculous. France delayed, it is true; but when her scheme was once taken in hand seriously it had a rapid and startling success. The conjunction of the genius of Pitt and the genius of Wolfe was almost miraculous, and that conjunction alone it was that ruined the cause of France.

Louisiana—a *damnosa hereditas* indeed for France—had an eventful history, terminating in an episode that is worth studying. The colony was ceded to Spain in the year 1762, as the price of the Spanish alliance against England. It remained in the hands of Spain for forty years; and then became the centre of one of those intrigues that justly earned for Napoleon the nickname of Jupiter-Scapin. His dealings with Louisiana showed a truly Olympian vastness of design—a design that he worked out with the tortuous cunning of a rascally attorney. The problem was to raise money for the English war; and he began as far from his object as to offer the King of Spain a throne for a member of his family. The throne was to be formed out of the territories of Parma — territories

that it is perhaps needless to say did not belong to France. So far, there was nothing in the transaction to awaken suspicion or to reveal Napoleon's object. It was natural that the King of Spain should desire to see another throne in his family; it was natural that Napoleon should feel flattered at the idea of creating a king, and keeping him waiting in his ante-chamber, as he actually did. The kingdom was formed—the kingdom of Etruria — and the Spanish Prince took possession.

Napoleon's price was the really very moderate price of the cession of Louisiana —a colony that had never profited any European Power yet. Spain made the cession without demur. Louisiana was indeed valueless to France as a colony. But Napoleon did not propose to re-open the question of French colonization in North America. Nor did he propose to offer the colony to any other European Power: he offered it to the United States, who would be, as he calculated, eager purchasers. He was right. They paid him three millions

and a quarter sterling for an asset which he had acquired for nothing; so that the First Consul had the profit of paying this very large sum into his war-chest, and the pleasure of dealing England a shrewd thrust.

It is often made a matter of reproach to France that she has produced so many colonial adventurers. It has even been maintained that the scanty success enjoyed by France in her Imperial enterprises is largely to be ascribed to her superabundant crop of adventurers. It is chiefly French writers who take this view—writers who admire and envy the more solid results that have been attained by the comparatively plodding English. Such writers overlook the immense debt that England herself owes to her adventurers—her Raleighs, and Drakes, and Hudsons. France failed, not in consequence of her adventurers, but in spite of them. Adventurers not only are not harmful to a country seeking to found a colonial empire—they are indispensable to such a country; they are her pioneers. Without adventurers an empire cannot be

founded, although it is true that in order to consolidate an empire so founded one of two subsequent conditions is indispensable—either a spontaneous outflow of settlers, or else a steady colonizing policy on the part of the Home Government.

France enjoyed neither of these advantages, and yet how nearly she succeeded! It is true that there was too much adventure altogether about the Canadian population: there were too many *coureurs de bois* among their scanty numbers. Nevertheless, the French colony founded by adventurers was more than a match for the English colony founded by settlers. But because France had begun too late to fill out this first sketch of a colonial empire, the slender fabric of the French colony went down before the dead weight of the English assault.

About the history of Canada we have to remark that there was a settled population sufficiently large, with permanent interests of sufficient magnitude, to neutralize one very painful feature of the French policy of adventure — the personal jealousy and

rivalries of individuals. Of course there were such jealousies and rivalries, but they were neither so bitter in themselves nor so disastrous to France as the same painful incidents proved to be in India. On the whole, the policy of French Canada was free from these dissensions, and yet Canada passed over to England.

But France had her revenge. Not twenty years had passed after the fall of Quebec before she dealt a heavy return blow at England. She recognized the United States, and, by placing her navy in opposition to the navy of England, she finally severed the colonies from their mother-country. In North America, at the close of the long duel, France was a little more than quits.

On the mainland the contest for the dominion of the continent was almost exclusively between France and England. Holland dropped out of the running very early; Spain had comparatively trifling interests there. But in the vast and varied region of the West Indies all the colonizing races of the world struggled with each other for

two centuries and a half. The shiftings of power in North America, although great, were definitely effected but seldom, and at rare intervals of time. But war in the West Indies never ceased, for when peace was officially concluded there still remained the buccaneers. The shiftings of power were not only frequent but kaleidoscopic, and if any attempt were to be made to record them nothing less than an encyclopædia would suffice. Nevertheless, we shall not lose much by passing them over, for they all depended in the past, as they must depend in the future, on the balance of sea-power. In the past, when the great fleet actions had been fought, the islands invariably fell, one by one, to the victors. So it will be in the future.

At the present day the West Indian Islands are held by Spain, France, Holland, and England. Spain, with the aid of 250,000 soldiers—or rather more than the whole army of India, native and English combined—still maintains a precarious dominion in Cuba. France holds Martinique and Guadaloupe,

with some dependencies; Holland holds Curaçao, finally returned to her at the great peace; England holds the greater part of the remaining islands. The two great possessions of France, Martinique and Guadaloupe, have over and over again been English possessions, and have regularly been restored at the conclusion of peace. There is only one lesson to be learnt from all these incidents, and that is the very plain one that nothing is certain here except to the Power that commands the sea.

On the whole, there is little for France to regret in the West Indies. Any losses that she has sustained she has sustained as the direct consequence of the loss of sea-power, and without sea-power the most exalted genius for colonization would not have secured for her more than her present possessions.

Far different is the case with the East Indies, for French India is a great 'might have been,' which France must needs regret even unto this day. She has good reason to do so. British India is the greatest political

achievement since the empire of Alexander. We are still too near to the colossal fabric to appreciate its grandeur. It is only down the perspective of centuries that the structure can be seen in its right proportions. Why is this not a French instead of a British Empire? The French were there before us; they possessed in a high degree the two qualities of intelligence and imagination, both of which are invaluable in such an enterprise; and these qualities had full play, without the neutralizing influence of a population of settlers—an influence which always tells in favour of England—for there was from the commencement no possibility of settling.

The reason may be found in the fatal weakness of a policy of pure adventure—a policy of which the characteristics, both good and bad, had untrammelled play in India, and the bad outweighed the good. As a rule, the English in India, although often personally inferior to their French rivals, pulled together. This was because they had a deeper sense of their duty towards

each other than the French, and a stronger feeling of the obedience due to the home authorities. There resulted a sort of sense of discipline or service feeling, which, though rough, sufficed for the circumstances. All this was wanting to the French, and in consequence they simply cut each other's throats. We are accustomed to blame ourselves for the scurvy treatment that we dealt out to our great Indian pioneers, and to deplore their spirit of dissension among themselves. But we were a band of brothers compared to the French, whose personal vanity and inconceivable spite and envy towards each other were the real causes of their failure. Sea-power plays only a secondary part in this drama; there was at least one opportunity of founding a great French empire in India which sea-power could not have hindered, or even seriously annoyed when once it was founded.

It is only with partial reason that Macaulay complains of the treatment that India has received at the hands of English historians. No doubt Indian history has been dully

treated, but if Macaulay is a brilliant exception, he only attained that position by laying on the colours, as he himself would have said, half an inch thick, by wild generalizations, by extravagant exaggeration, and by violent partisanship. The simple truth is that at this period Indian history is appallingly dreary.

When the great age of the Moguls was over, when Akbar had become a memory and Bijapur a ruin, Indian history subsides into a record of the scrambles of a horde of tenth-rate men. Some palace favourite, some soldier more daring than his fellows, seizes the Masnad, and rules precariously until a palace intrigue or the revolt of a provincial officer terminates his little day of glory by poison or steel, and his place is taken by a rascally rebel like himself—Zimri succeeds Omri. There is movement in plenty, but it is the movement of a seething cauldron—movement without advance.

In the broad wakes that the course of France and England traced in this *Male bolge* we find now one princelet, now another,

swept to the surface, and for a time before he is once more submerged he remains visible and perhaps conspicuous. A great native ruler, a Haidar or a Shivají, arises but rarely, and his type is always the same—that of the ruthless soldier. India is no longer in labour with Akbars, and not as yet with Sálár Jungs. The old type of statesman no longer appears; the new type, trained under English influence, is not to be developed for another century and a half; the immediate future of the continent is clearly, from the commencement of the protracted period of collapse, in the hands of France or of England. There are three great epochs in each of which it appeared possible that France might wrest the Empire of India from England, or rather when it appeared almost certain that England would be expelled from the continent, where her foothold was not yet secure. In the first two of these decisive epochs, nothing but the mutual jealousy of Frenchmen ruined the cause of France; in the third, nothing but sheer good luck saved the cause of England.

These three epochs are :

1. The epoch of Dupleix and Labourdonnais.

2. The epoch of Lally, Bussy and D'Aché.

3. The epoch of Suffren.

These three epochs form three distinct crises in the fate of the East. They are to a certain extent linked together by the services of Bussy, who was conspicuous in the first two struggles between France and England, and who also gave some assistance to Suffren, although in 1782 he was only the shadow of the Bussy of thirty years before.

Just as in studying the lost Empire of France in North America we had to put out of our heads the vast extent of the American continent, and realize that the fate of the country was settled in a comparatively small area round the Canadian Lakes ; so in regard to the lost Empire of France in India, we have to fix our attention on one small part of the Presidency of Madras. In this narrow space it was that France and England three times struggled for empire ; here it was that France was three times thrown, and here it

was that, even as late as Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, there were good hopes that the influence of France might be re-established through the sympathy of 'Citoyen Tippoo.' These hopes, which were well founded, were finally extinguished at the fall of Seringapatam, in the year 1799. This event took place one hundred years after the birth of Dupleix, who was actually a man of the seventeenth century. He was not a noble, as were most of the great French adventurers in the East: he was a man of good commercial connections; early initiated into the habits of trade, he remained throughout his life an excellent man of affairs.

But that was not all. Dupleix was a man of the highest capacity; and, conspicuous though he was as a man of business, he was still more remarkable as a political organizer, and a past grand master in the arts of Oriental intrigue. His general business training was supplemented by a long service, half commercial, half official, in the French places of business, Pondicherry and Chándanagar, and at the age of forty-three he found himself

Governor-General of the French Indies. The headquarters of the Government were at Pondicherry, about one hundred miles south of Madras. He immediately set to work to develop the trading centre of Pondicherry into something more dignified—into a great French State.

We are to remember that at this moment Clive and Warren Hastings were still both boys; Clive had just joined at Madras as a junior writer, and Hastings had just entered at Westminster; so long a start had this very great man of the two most illustrious empire makers of modern days. We are also to remember that in his dream of turning European traders into conquerors he was entirely original. We must also give Dupleix the credit for having discovered the means to realize his dream—the drilling of native troops on the European plan, and, by joining the forces so raised to small bodies of European troops, to form an army that would be irresistible by any native levies.

His success was immediate, complete, and startling. His weaknesses served him as

well as his virtues, even better perhaps. He was excessively vain, but the circus-riding costume in which he indulged only passed for becoming pomp. Moreover, the people were too deeply impressed with Dupleix's personality to remark that he called himself, indifferently, by the Hindu title of Raja or the Mussulman title of Nawáb. He held gorgeous receptions which he was able to pay for without impairing the vast fortune that his shrewdness had enabled him to acquire. His spies were everywhere ; in the inmost recesses of palaces the secrets of courts were whispered to the agents of Dupleix. The immediate influence that he exercised was already considerable ; the indirect influence that he acquired by means of his genius for intrigue was incalculable—probably incalculable even to himself. The French Empire was founded. From the Prince on the Masnad to the petty English traders at Madras, the whole of Southern India trembled at the frown of Dupleix. He was the master of thirty millions of men, whom he ruled with more absolute authority than his master

ruled the inhabitants of France. If the command of the sea had been assured to him, there is no doubt that the days of the English in India would have been numbered.

Among the causes of the ruin of the French Colonial Empire, the neglect by the home authorities of their brilliant adventurers takes a high place. Dupleix, like all who followed him, suffered severely from this neglect. The empire which he had founded depended, of course, on a kernel of good European troops and a small supply of French officers to train and lead the natives. This would not have been a severe tax on the resources of France—not at all a heavy price to pay for an empire ; and, considering the magical consequences of the use to which Dupleix had put the forces actually at his disposal, it may be said to have been absolutely trifling. But he was miserably served in this respect. He ought to have been all the more grateful to Labourdonnais for coming so opportunely to his aid, especially considering that the fleet was provided from Labourdonnais' private resources.

Labourdonnais was Governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon. On the outbreak of war with England he was eager to aid in the expulsion of the English from India. The Government would give him no ships; he managed to get some together himself. If he had no ships, still less had he supplies or men. He managed to provide everything. With a vigour and patriotism that is beyond praise, he made his way with his scratch squadron to the Coromandel coast. He sighted the fleet of Paton, and by feints and a bold bearing that reminds one of the resources of Cochrane he managed to frighten Paton away. He, a retired merchant captain, with an amateur crew, drove off a fleet of King's ships.

He immediately set to work to blockade the town of Madras that Paton had been despatched to guard. Madras capitulated after a bombardment, and was ransomed for a sum variously stated. The average of the different statements is a little over half a million sterling. Here, indeed, was an ally worthy of Dupleix's genius; Dupleix ought

to have welcomed him with open arms. He himself, a mere business man, was founding an empire; Labourdonnais, a mere civilian, was capable of beating off a squadron of King's ships, and reducing Madras in less than a week. Two such men, acting together, would have been irresistible.

Dupleix's conduct on this occasion is traceable to no principle of human action except the meanest spite and jealousy, developed to an incomprehensible pitch. Instead of praising Labourdonnais for coming at all, he severely rebuked him for not having come earlier. Instead of warmly thanking him for raising vessels at his own expense, he bitterly complained that his squadron was so weak. He tore up Labourdonnais' treaty, and violated the pledged word of France in the face of all India. Labourdonnais had been literally and emphatically forbidden to make any fresh acquisitions of territory on the mainland; hence his stipulations for a ransom. Dupleix over-rode all his stipulations, burnt Madras to the ground, and carried away the Governor and the principal

inhabitants to figure in a sort of triumph at Pondicherry.

It is a miserable exhibition of spite and jealousy from beginning to end, and one stands the more aghast at such a maniacal outbreak in that up to this time one cannot avoid feeling great sympathy with Dupleix. His daring was so great, his genius so original and profound, that we are carried away with admiration for him, in spite of the fact that he was daily compassing the ruin of the English in India.

His jealousy drove Labourdonnais to sea again. Dupleix would concert nothing with the captor of Madras, and the great sailor, who asked nothing better than to serve his country to the best of his ability, was hunted out of the Indian Ocean. Arrived at Mauritius, he found another man, a nominee of Dupleix, installed in his place. His accounts were called for, and he was ordered home. Surely hatred and malice must be exhausted by now.

But Dupleix's fund of jealousy was inexhaustible, and his arm was long. He

pursued Labourdonnais to France with his malice, and caused him to be thrown into the Bastile immediately on his arrival in Paris. He was allowed to languish in prison for three years and a half—he, an absolutely innocent man; and not only an innocent man, but one who had rendered the most distinguished services to his country. He was brought out of prison and tried—for what, it would be hard to say. But one reply of his has been preserved, and shows wonderful gallantry and courage, considering his forlorn circumstances. He was asked how it was that his private affairs had prospered so much more than the company's, and he replied to his cross-questioner: 'Because when I managed my own affairs I did what I thought best, and when I had to manage yours I had to do what you told me.'

Labourdonnais was acquitted and set at liberty, but he died six months afterwards of a broken heart. His widow was accorded, with many consoling and flattering expressions, the derisive pension of eight pounds a month.

The fall of Dupleix is generally narrated as if it were the sad fate of a gallant man who is badly supported by his Government, and this is in part true. But the story of the collapse of Dupleix's power is generally told without detailed reference to Labourdonnais, excepting that the two men did not get on well; one's pity is all asked for Dupleix. But when we realize how odiously he behaved to Labourdonnais it is not only without regret, it is with actual complacency that we read the story of his ruin; it is a positive tale of poetic justice.

In Dupleix's situation a navy would have been useful. We have seen how he behaved to the man who brought him one, for no other reason than that the sole merits of its achievements could not be claimed by himself. If a navy was desirable, an army, a European army, was indispensable. Climate and active warfare, and perhaps irregular living, had thinned the ranks of his Frenchmen; his officers were few and incompetent; the recruits sent him were bad material; and Dupleix himself was no soldier. The story

told of his preference for an undistinguished position in the rear of a battle, on the ground that the whistling of musket-balls disturbed his reflections, is told on good authority—Dupleix's own. But it is hard to believe that so great a man was a coward. It is incontestable, however, that he was no general.

There was associated with him at this time a young man of considerable military talents, the Marquis de Bussy. Bussy was destined to play towards Lally, in the second great epoch of French adventure, a similar part to that which Labourdonnais played towards Dupleix himself. At this time, however—whether or not it was that he had taken warning by the fate of Labourdonnais—he was far away from headquarters, busily and most successfully engaged in extending French influence in the northern Deccan. The English Dupleix had hitherto, and with good reason, looked down upon as mere book-keepers. The natives thought even more meanly of us.

But among the book-keepers there was a

young man named Robert Clive. It was not Clive who put an end to the ambitions of Dupleix, as we shall see; but he rendered his country this great service, that he changed the English cause from one hopelessly lost into one that had a right to be represented as still existing, and even rivalling the French. For it was in Paris that Dupleix was ruined. If Clive had not, by the defence of Arcot, restored our prestige, and regained for us a party among the natives—in fact, given something for diplomatists to work on, Dupleix would never have been recalled. As it was, we regained by diplomacy most of what had been lost in war.

It was represented by us in Paris that affairs in the East Indies had grown deplorably confused from the habit of French traders interfering in the affairs of native princes. From the English point of view, this was indeed a deplorable habit, for the French were infinitely cleverer at the work than we were. It was further represented that the Governor-General, Dupleix, had greatly exceeded his powers, and that there could

be no reasonable expectation of a lasting peace until he was recalled; he was nothing but a fire-brand, so it was urged. These statements were all absolutely true—from the English point of view; but it is none the less extraordinary that the French Ministry should have fallen into so simple a trap. They agreed to desist from interference with native courts; they consented to recall Dupleix. He was recalled, and died in straitened circumstances soon after, of disease brought on by anxiety and disappointment.

His immense fortune had been dissipated in the service of his country, and he could obtain no indemnity for his expenses out of pocket incurred in combating the English. He received no title of honour, and no recognition for his work. Perhaps he sometimes thought of Labourdonnais and his three years of gaol, or, in his poverty, of Madame Labourdonnais, with her pension of eight pounds a month. The fate of both men was a disgrace to their Government, but the fate of Dupleix was, personally, richly deserved.

The first epoch of the great struggle between France and England in India closed on October 5, 1754, when Dupleix sailed from Madras for the last time. His dismissal was a capital blunder on the part of the French Government, but it was only the crowning blunder of a policy of mistakes. These mistakes were: refusing a fleet to Labourdonnais; omitting to censure Dupleix for his treatment of that most useful public servant; permitting Labourdonnais to be iniquitously brought to trial for nobly serving his country; neglecting to send Dupleix a proper supply of soldiers and officers; and finally weakly consenting to his recall.

On all these occasions, we are to remember, it was not a mere possibility that was at stake; the empire was there, already built up. These blunders are all reducible to the single formula: neglect of the Home Government to support its adventurers. Dupleix's only blunder was his atrocious behaviour towards Labourdonnais; he was not too severely punished for it by the

neglect that he himself received at the hands of the Home Government.

When we compare the conduct of Dupleix towards Labourdonnais with the conduct of Lawrence towards Clive, we realize that it is actually in a superior moral force that the British found the strength to overthrow the French. Clive had just performed one of the greatest military feats of his generation, and was proceeding on a career of conquest when a superior officer landed. Although Clive had in fact received no military training, his native talent was clearly of the highest order. Yet he at once placed himself under Lawrence's orders. One would say that he did so modestly, if modesty were not altogether out of keeping with his character. In his early days Clive was an extremely ill-bred, ill-mannered young man, sullen to all and insolent to his superiors. In his maturity he showed himself exceedingly vain of a very ugly person, inordinately proud of his peerage and his red ribbon, pushing, ostentatious and assertive. He was fully as acquisitive as Dupleix himself, amassed an immense fortune,

and did not conceal the fact that he felt as much pride in his money as in his title. In truth, the mighty Clive was made of very common clay. This haughty, successful, rebellious young man placed himself under the orders of Lawrence—not ostentatiously, boasting of his self-abnegation, but simply and quietly as a matter of duty, or rather as a matter of course.

When we have said thus much it is perhaps unnecessary to add that he did not intrigue against Lawrence, or strive to increase his own glory at the expense of his senior's renown.

If we turn now to Lawrence, we find that he was a deserving, steady officer, a major at that time. He was, as Chesterfield said of Marlborough, 'of a good plain middling understanding,' capable as a soldier, and respectability itself. Respectability is always frightened of genius, and an able, insolent young amateur like Clive was just the sort of man to alarm a Lawrence. He might well, without discredit to himself, have put forward Clive's somewhat irregular position as an excuse for refusing him active employment.

But Lawrence had that touch of loftiness which comes from devotion to one's country, and which can ennoble even the most respectable people. He not only did not decline Clive's services—he not only did not belittle them, or Clive himself—he embraced the chance of availing himself of the services of such a genius of war, a genius so far superior to his own ; and he warmly defended Clive against his many enemies who sneered at his 'luck.' 'Not luck,' said Lawrence, 'but eminent ability.'

Here, in a nutshell, is the secret of the downfall of the French Empire in India. Their men were, on the whole, superior to ours, and they had a long start of us. But when it came to a pinch, the English sank all mutual jealousies, and even the most pushing and self-assertive of men felt that there was something at stake greater even than his important self : it was the cause of his country. On the other hand, a crisis was not the moment to choose for inquiring whether Clive's commission came from the Horse-Guards or not. The course of duty

was plain—to beat the French ; and if Clive could help him, Lawrence was not the man to be jealous of the glory that must of necessity accrue to his subordinate rather than to himself. All this was done without fine phrases, and as a matter of duty, or even as a matter of course.

We have seen how woefully below this standard Dupleix fell. The story of the second great crisis, when for the second time the French Empire was built up, and then torn down by French hands, points the same moral, but points it even more strongly than the story of Dupleix and Labourdonnais. In this epoch we have two great names—

BUSSY—LALLY.

There was a third figure—D'Aché ; but although his position as naval commander threw a great deal of power into his hands, and enabled him to do France a vast amount of damage, he was a minor figure altogether, and the story centres round the quarrel between Bussy and Lally.

The Marquis de Bussy—perhaps because

he was a soberer person—has not dazzled the eyes of his countrymen or of the world like the brilliant Dupleix. Nevertheless it may well be argued that he was the greater man. To begin with, he was a good soldier, so his work went on without the friction that everywhere comes from divided command.

He had not Dupleix's unrivalled power of developing and directing secret service, but his own personal ascendancy was very great. He was a much simpler character than Dupleix. He did not indulge in fanfares or displays, but he made up for this loss of power—a real loss of power in the East—by the solid advantage that he gained from his directness of character. The native princes came to lean on him and look up to him, and though he never called himself a Rájá, his influence was immense.

His sphere of action was the Deccan, his centre the Imperial city of Aurangabad. It is perhaps significant that this was a con veniently long way from Dupleix. His influence was at its height in the year 1754, at which date he was thirty-six years of age,

and we have thus to realize that at the moment when Dupleix was recalled, the French Empire in India almost extended over the whole of Southern India. Dupleix's empire, somewhat damaged by the assault of Clive, was reduced to possession ; Bussy's needed only the touch of a small and competent military force to transform it from a sphere of influence into a grand dominion.

Owing either to indifference, or else (which is less easy to believe) to extreme gullibility, the French ministry had played our game with a thoroughness and promptitude that we could not have desired to see exceeded, and had recalled Dupleix, leaving no successor. There remained, however, Bussy. The French Government appears to have realized when too late that they had acted with something less than wisdom, and were already repenting their precipitate recall of Dupleix when the Seven Years' War broke out. They determined to seize the opportunity and to regain by vigorous military action what had been taken from them by able negotiation.

It was a very good opening. Clive was in Europe; Bussy's influence in the Deccan was extending daily; the English had just been expelled from Bengal, so that nothing remained of the British Empire in the East but the feeble settlements on the Coromandel coast. To Bussy's mind these settlements did not greatly matter one way or the other. If his own plan succeeded, and he formed a great French inland State, it would be a State of such dimensions that it would be independent of the command of the sea; if the English became troublesome they could always be expelled without any great difficulty. He looked forward eagerly to the arrival of an army from Europe, hoping to engage the commandant (whoever he might prove to be) in his plans.

The officer selected for the command was Thomas Arthur Lally, at that time one of the greatest living masters of regular warfare. He had been aide-de-camp to Prince Charlie in the '45. Wherever there had been an opportunity of striking a blow at England, Lally had been foremost—he had

struck us hard at Fontenoy with his brigade of Irish : hatred to England was the inspiration of his career. A special regiment of Irish had been raised for him, and the command of it conferred on him. He was created Baron of Tollendal and Count of Lally, and advanced to the dignity of a Grand Cross of St. Louis. When he took up the Indian command, he was fifty-three years of age.

The first comment that occurs to us on this appointment is, that Lally was too great a man for the place. It was also remarked, at the time, with some misgiving, that Lally had had no experience of irregular warfare, and was known to be a strict disciplinarian. To both of these reasonings a sufficient answer was found ; Lally was no doubt a man of considerable position, holding the rank of a full Lieutenant-General, among other distinctions ; but that only showed how much importance the Government attached to the conquest of India. It was true that he was a stern soldier, but then he was to take his own regiment of Irish, 1,080

strong, with him, and they were accustomed to his ways. We shall see how far this reasoning was sound, and what other points there were that the minister had not, perhaps, sufficiently weighed, before selecting Lally. It is easy to be wise after the event ; but the wisest course would have been to send Bussy the men. But Bussy was a company's officer, and the Government was uneasy at the idea of having a second Dupleix on their hands. So Lally was despatched, and the idea that an Irish refugee, commanding his own regiment of Irishmen, was about to dash in pieces the fabric of what remained of the British Empire in India, naturally threw over the expedition a sort of halo of retributive justice.

On April 28, 1758, four years after the death of Dupleix, seven years after the death of Labourdonnais, Lally landed at Pondicherry. The actors in the first great drama had passed away, with the exception of Bussy, who (properly supported) might yet have retrieved everything. But Lally paid no attention to him. Moreover, we are to

remark that Lally came a little late. When the Seven Years' War broke out, the English were expelled from Bengal, and if Lally had reduced the settlements on the Coromandel, he could have come to the assistance of the enemies of England in Bengal, and crossed swords with Clive there. But in 1758 we had regained our old position, and greatly increased our authority. Clive had fought Plassy, and Coote was with him, already soon to be—at thirty-three—a Lieutenant-Colonel. Lally's task was, at least, doubled.

He turned first to the easy task of reducing the Madras Settlements, and it now appeared that he was hopelessly out of place in his Indian command. Obviously, his first duty was to get the settlement into something like order, to expel the English, and consolidate his forces to resist the attack that was to be expected from Bengal. To achieve this much, the mere commencement of his work, he would need the hearty co-operation of all alike—French and native. By way of compassing this end, he denounced the French as a pack of swindlers, and the

natives as black swine. It is true that his instructions contained some reference to peculation which Lally was to put down, but he chose the most inopportune moment to disclose his instructions, and abuse, which is always useless, was at this juncture simply disastrous.

There have always been capable men who can do eminently good work if the service runs on wheels, but who are disconcerted at the first break-down in commissariat or transport. Lally was one of these. His native temper disqualified him for compromise. He was bitter and imperious. The habits of a lifetime had made him a master of regular warfare, but his mind was stiff with age, and he became more and more irritable as difficulties multiplied, and his own helplessness in the face of them became daily more apparent. Transport failed, so he pressed all the natives, irrespective of caste, into the transport service, thus ruining in a week the work of half a century of intelligent handling of the natives. Money ran short, so he called on Bussy to supply him out of

the hoards that he at once presumed him to have accumulated after the fashion of Dupleix. In point of fact Bussy was not an acquisitive man, and he received Lally's demand with a simplicity that only an innocent man, or a most accomplished rogue, could assume. Lally favoured him in return with so insulting a stare that Bussy was mortally affronted.

Bussy was the man on whom Lally ought to have leant with absolute confidence; he possessed tact, of which Lally was totally destitute; local information, which Lally neither possessed nor attempted to acquire; and immense influence. He had hurried down from Aurangabad to greet Lally on his arrival, and to engage his interest in his plans. These plans were to carry the newly-landed troops inland, and away from the Coromandel coast (which would be good for their health) to engage them in the task of converting the Deccan 'sphere of influence' into a dominion, and to allow the English (if they dared—which they certainly would not) to attack the French in their inland strong-

hold. Lally pooh-poohed Bussy's ideas, not only with contempt, but with insult. 'It is already too much condescension to listen to the vapourings of that madman,' he wrote.

A man must be very confident indeed of his own ability before he can use such strong language about a colleague's views. But when we learn what Lally's own plans were, we can only conclude that if anybody was mad it certainly was not Bussy. 'It is in Bengal that we must strike at the English,' he wrote; 'I shall proceed to the Ganges by sea or land, and it is there that I shall find your talents and experience of great use to me.'

From Madras to the Ganges by land! with an army of five hundred Frenchmen and a few discontented native troops, without money, without transport, and without supplies! It is the dream of a lunatic or a very ignorant man. Perhaps by sea then? It seems incredible, but it is nevertheless the fact that when Lally talked about proceeding to Bengal by sea he actually had no fleet, D'Aché having sailed away, after a slight brush with the English, in September, 1758.

Lally had landed on the Coromandel coast in April, 1757. It was not till November, 1759, that he met Coote in battle. During that period of two years and six months, he might, if he had listened to Bussy, have turned the whole of the Deccan into so great a military state, that he could have crushed the English settlements by the dead weight of the French impact, just as the English had ousted the French in Canada. Instead, he had gained trifling victories and undergone trifling reverses; he had destroyed the native confidence in the French, and ruined Bussy's schemes. With the remains of his discontented army he had now to fight as great a soldier as himself—Eyre Coote.

Sir Eyre Coote was born in the year 1726; he had been with Clive at Plassy, and was just created Lieutenant-Colonel. His experience in warfare was entirely Indian, and, therefore, although Lally's junior by twenty-four years, he was a more competent general for campaigning on the Coromandel coast than the unfortunate Frenchman.

It is not too much to say that his Sepoys

adored him, whereas Lally's troops may have feared their chief; but they also regarded him with some suspicion and more dislike. On November 30, 1759, Coote gained the great victory of Wandewash; on the 22nd of the succeeding January he defeated Lally and took Bussy prisoner. On January 5, 1761, he captured Pondicherry and took Lally himself prisoner. For the second time the French Empire in India was broken down. But the second collapse was far more serious than the first. Dupleix's empire had been destroyed by dexterously securing his recall, and when he retired the English were left with no great authority in India; in fact, they were still very little respected as soldiers. But Bussy's empire, so far as the natives could see, had fallen in a way that they could understand; it had gone down before the assault of Coote. Henceforth it is the English who stand forth as the martial race. Of course, that is only half the story, and there is no doubt that if Lally (who was quite as good a soldier as Coote) had pulled with Bussy instead of ignorantly spurning his

help, the result would have been entirely different.

Lally's fate is generally cited as a shocking example of the ingratitude of kings. It is terrible to be guillotined for an error of judgment, but, then, what a gigantic error it was! Moreover, it was not an error committed, like Byng's, in a moment of battle; it was persisted in for two years and a half, during all of which time it must have been perfectly plain to Lally himself, without consulting Bussy or anybody else, that the French cause in his hands was going from bad to worse. He certainly deserved severe punishment; it would hardly have been too severe treatment if he had been broken and dismissed the service. His fate depended a good deal on the attitude of Bussy. The Marquis's intentions were very plainly expressed in five words—'Either Lally's head or mine,' he said.

It was almost too much to expect that Bussy should show himself a generous enemy. His noble ambitions were ruined in the moment of fruition, his glorious dreams dissipated, himself defeated and a prisoner of

war. From the moment that the French cause was ruined he set himself to work to glut his revenge on Lally. The unhappy General came to England and was warmly received. He was our determined foe, and had been so all his life; but he had always been a gallant foe, and he was now, in the autumn of his days, a most unfortunate man. Bussy went straight to Paris. He was connected by marriage with Choiseul the Minister, and Choiseul gave Lally a friendly hint that he would do well to stay out of France for a time. Lally's English friends did their best to keep him in London, but he brushed all remonstrances aside, and betook himself to Paris to demand a trial. His prosecution was commenced on July 6, 1763, and was fiercely pushed on. On May 5, 1766, he was condemned to death, and on May 9, Thomas Arthur, Baron of Tollendal, Count of Lally, a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Louis, and Lieutenant-General, being now sixty-four years of age, was dragged through Paris on a hurdle, with a gag in his mouth, and guillotined.

Bussy's revenge was now glutted; perhaps we may not blame him; perhaps Lally deserved his fate — or very nearly deserved it. Nevertheless, these fierce personal animosities have much to answer for in the ruin of the cause of the French Indian Empire. The first of these gorgeous fabrics was built up by Dupleix, and by Dupleix it was ruined out of jealousy of Labourdonnais. The second was built up by Bussy, and ruined by Lally out of jealousy of Bussy. The third never got further than the foundations, its erection being suddenly arrested by the conclusion of peace. The year 1763 saw the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris. By that Treaty France lost Canada, and prior to its conclusion she had suffered very heavy losses in India; concurrently with these losses by France immense additional territories had been acquired by England in Bengal.

It is not to be expected that a great nation, proud and mighty, like France, should tamely endure such intolerable humiliation. Peace was no sooner concluded than her Ministers

were at work in every direction for a new attack on England. Although by a strange contrast the English Ministries remained for long after the Treaty of Paris feeble and frivolous, in one direction we were active—secret service. Very curious it is to read the record of mining and counter-mining that went on about that period, our agents working hard to discover Choiseul's plans, while Choiseul carefully put forward misleading plans, which were eagerly transmitted to London as proof of the zeal and acumen of our agents.

The French had learnt one great lesson from the Seven Years' War: they must not engage at one and the same time in hostilities on the Continent and in a naval campaign with Great Britain. Accordingly, their continental relations were kept peaceable, while their navy was steadily increased in strength and improved in quality.

In England, as the French saw with pleasure, each Government was feebler and more incompetent than its predecessor. France was watchfully biding her time.

The rebellion of the American colonies gave her her chance, and we have seen how she availed herself of it. When things were going sufficiently ill for England in the West, when it seemed as if the sun of England's glory was really setting, France planned a grand attack on the British Empire in the East.

Her diplomatic activity there had never ceased, and in Haidar she found a lever for overthrowing the English ready to her hand. Her plan now was to stir up this mighty soldier to overthrow the English, and, without attempting land operations on a grand scale on her own account, to cut the English off from obtaining succour by sea by means of a powerful French squadron in the Indian Ocean. An admirable plan, and it was admirably carried out, and had actually succeeded, when the Treaty of Versailles snatched away the third and last chance that fell to France of founding a great Indian Empire. The man selected for the naval part of the work was the greatest sailor of France, and perhaps the

second greatest sailor that ever lived—Bailli Suffren.

The parallel between Suffren and Nelson is inevitable. Both were extremely nervous, irritable, excitable, and anxious men, but the ways in which their tempers manifested themselves were very different, and were derived from the training of their lives. Nelson was of humble extraction, and raised himself to great eminence. In the course of his rise he had to practise, as a chief element of his success, the greatest self-command and even self-repression. Suffren was a great French noble, accustomed all his life to deference as his due and obedience as his right. One consequence of Nelson's training was that he suffered from fits of profound depression ; his anxiety ran to melancholy and even hysteria. Suffren's anxiety exploded in outbursts of fury, or boiled over in torrents of scalding invective.

These contrary results reacted on their subordinates, and on the crews under their command, which were from the outset crews and officers of a very different stamp. Nelson's

crews had been moulded by the iron will of St. Vincent and Howe into a state of perfect discipline; his officers were mostly men like himself. The consequence was that when Nelson took command they followed him to battle not only with readiness, but with rapture. Suffren's captains were also men like unto himself—indolent, haughty nobles, and their Admiral's temper did not tend to weld them together.

Nelson was lean to emaciation, but of an infinitely kind and winning temper, and not so careful of his dignity that he minded 'shinning' up the rigging to show a trembling middy, newly come aboard, that there was nothing to be frightened of in going aloft.

Suffren was enormously fat and choleric, and as much of a grand seigneur on his quarter-deck as on his *terres*. Nelson's sphere of action was much grander than Suffren's, and the consequence of all these contrary conditions is that, while Nelson appears in history as a ruler of the battle and the tempest, a very god of war, who,

when he smote his enemies, not only defeated but destroyed them, Suffren is to most of us a name only. Nelson was dead at forty-seven; Suffren was ten years older before he fought his great battles.

There may be a question which of the two was the greater sailor, the greater master of tactics and resource; but when we read how Suffren's laggard captains betrayed him over and over again, there can be no doubt which was the greater man.

The English Admiral opposed to Suffren was Sir Edward Hughes, a good specimen of an English sailor, who generally gets less credit than his due, because in his last encounter with Suffren, having eighteen sail to Suffren's fifteen, he declined a decisive battle. He is supposed to have lost his nerve. But seeing that this was his fifth fleet action with Suffren in the course of two years, the wonder is not so much that he lost his nerve, but that he had not lost it earlier. To have fought four fleet actions with Suffren, and not to be utterly defeated, is enough glory for one man.

Suffren arrived off the coast of Coromandel with an inferior fleet, and, although not uniformly victorious, he yet continually improved his position. He had no base originally; he supplied his want by conquering one—Trincomalee. He had no spare yards or rigging; he got them partly from captured prizes, partly by improvising them from material obtained ashore. He was a complete master of the art of developing resources out of nothing. He was granted only a small fraction of the military support that had been promised by France to Haidar; nevertheless, by diplomatic treatment he contrived to keep that chieftain in fighting mood.

As regards the land operations, he had but little responsibility; they were entrusted to Bussy, now a gouty invalid of sixty-four. But Bussy was no match for Coote, who was now fifty-three years of age, and a K.B. He had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in India in 1777, and took up his command on March 25, 1779. He took the field in Madras very unwillingly, being in feeble health; but in July, 1781, he gained the

great victory of Porto Novo, and continued victorious throughout the years 1781 and 1782. In the next year he died. Bussy survived him till 1785, when he died at Pondicherry.

But after Porto Novo there was little chance of making great progress on land. Everything depended on Suffren. If Hughes' fleet could be destroyed, the English settlements would be cut off and compelled to surrender. Suffren, like all the great French Imperial pioneers, was badly served by the Home Government. Instead of sending him reinforcements of sufficient strength to reach the East, ships were forwarded by twos and threes. These little companies were not strong enough to force their way unharmed through the narrow seas; often they were cut off; often when they reached Suffren they did so with forces impaired by conflict. But Suffren's genius supplied all defects. Hughes seems to have fought with him in something of Wellington's spirit: 'It was not for me to bandy manœuvres with the greatest captain of the age; all that

I had to do was to stand still and resist him.'

'What am I to do with the ship, sir?' said the sailing master of one of Hughes' captains, when he had an overwhelming strength bearing down on the ship. 'There is nothing to be done with her,' said the captain, 'except to fight her till she sinks.'

It was in this temper that the English fought; they were in the grip of a commanding genius, but they prolonged the struggle for years. At last Suffren had achieved his end. He was blockading Madras, where our feeble forces were surrounded on the land side. Hughes was cruising outside Suffren's fleet, but he dared not close with that terrible foe. His nerve failed him, and he sailed away. The fall of Madras was imminent, and with Madras would have gone the ascendancy over the whole of Southern India. On June 29 there came a messenger with a white flag, bearing the news that the Treaty of Versailles had been signed on February 9 preceding. So

passed away the last great danger to India from the French.

Suffren was neither guillotined for his services nor banished to his estates ; he was received with the most distinguished honour at Versailles. But what gratified him even more than his honour in France was the attention that he received from the English. His own captains did not appreciate him. The long campaign had irritated and fatigued them. They had little interest in the object of their labours, and they were exhausted by Suffren's endless activity, and had no eye for his genius.

But the English captains crowded to see him, to have the honour of shaking hands with so great a master of their craft, to be face to face with the great sailor before whose mighty assault even their stout hearts had so often stood still. With the roar of Suffren's broadsides yet in their ears, our captains pressed on board his flagship, to pay homage to the greatest Admiral of history—the man who was greater than De Ruyter, than Rooke, or Hawke himself. His own

captains had no homage to offer except the homage of a grudging obedience.

The interposition of the Treaty of Versailles was a piece of sheer good luck. We had fought stoutly, but we must needs have gone under if war had continued. Haidar was dead, it is true; but then so was Coote. The navy dominated the situation, and Suffren had won his campaign.

It is hard to say whether we ought to include in the Lost Empire of France those territories that she gained by the annexation of Holland. When the Emperor Napoleon raised his brother Louis to the throne of Holland the latter country became a tributary of France, and the Dutch colonial possessions were engulfed in the huge extent of the Empire. They included the Cape of Good Hope and Java. Both were captured by English troops: the first by an expedition under Sir David Bain, sent out from England; the second by an expedition under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, sent out from India. Java was restored and the Cape of Good Hope retained.

Of course, immense and sudden accretions of strength like these will always follow in the wake of a prodigious military force, wielded by a genius like Napoleon. Even these triumphs are nothing to what he effected in Europe itself; but there is no lesson to be drawn from these events, except the very primitive one that the strong will always conquer the weak. Spain once enjoyed an empire in Europe of the same kind, an empire founded partly on superior military forces; but also owing its immense extent, very largely, to a long series of lucky marriages of her princes to heiresses of great territories. But this also is not the kind of empire that is valuable as a study for Englishmen, seeking light from history on their own performances.

The Lost Empire of France, in so far as it was an empire, such as England at present holds, was lost to France for reasons which have been examined as shortly as possible in these pages. France possessed a very large number of those valuable and, indeed, indispensable pioneers—adventurers.

One colony, Canada, was strong and flourishing, even although very few settlers followed in the wake of the great Canadian adventurers. The colony founded by adventure, and strengthened by a very small infusion of colonizing blood, was more than a match for the English settlements, thickly populated in comparison though they were.

It went down, not before the New England settlers, but before the sheer dead weight of the English assault. It was a colony with its roots already struck deep into the ground; adequately supported from France, it would have grown to dominate the continent. In India the adventurers had full play. There it was the personal rivalry that ruined the French cause. Dupleix quarrelled with Labourdonnais; Lally quarrelled with Bussy.

On the whole, we must conclude that adventure was the driving force, East and West, of France: in the West adventure was not supported by the Home Government; in the East adventure did brilliantly; it was not so much from lack of support that

its achievements melted away, it was on account of the mutual jealousies of the adventurers.

We must note, however, that on the one occasion when there was nobody to be jealous of, France got the upper hand completely, thanks to the genius of Suffren ; and here, too, as in Canada, a little help from France would have turned the scale before the Treaty of Versailles robbed France of the fruits of her efforts.

In the West Indies it is now, as then and always, simply the superior naval power that dominates. In Africa France has not only lost nothing, she has very largely increased the area of her influence and authority. It is there that (as we saw from the passage of M. Leroy Beaulieu quoted at the head of this chapter) France hopes yet to redeem the losses of the past by founding a great African Empire.

Whether she will do so or not depends simply on the two questions : firstly, Can she induce her people to multiply and colonize, wherever colonization is possible? and,

secondly, Will she make up her mind to adequately support her adventurers, and to prevent them from quarrelling with each other?

V.

THE LOST EMPIRE OF HOLLAND.

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THE Dutch Empire holds our attention (not always our admiring attention) from the moment of its rise down to the present day. Its history is a long series of surprises, beginning with its origin, which seemed the most unlikely thing in the world, and continuing for two centuries and a half down to the date when, in defiance of all accepted conclusions, a very small country continues to occupy a very large position in the eyes of the world.

It is also fairly open to argument that the Dutch Empire should have no place in this volume because it is not lost. It still includes the island of Java, a great part of Borneo, New Guinea, practically the whole of Sumatra,

the Celebes, and the Moluccas—all of which, taken together, imply the dominion of the East Indian Archipelago. It also includes, in the West Indies, the island of Curaçao, and some dependencies. Great and even grandiose as these present possessions are for so small a State, the Lost Empire of Holland is yet of sufficient magnitude to justify the inclusion in this volume of an examination of the whole. It includes chiefly 'possibilities' —the possibility of a great North American State, expanding from the very early settlement of New Amsterdam; the possibility of a great South African State, expanding from the settlement of the Cape of Good Hope; the possibility of a great Indian Empire, arising from the Dutch settlements on the Ganges and the island of Ceylon. It includes also a few important posts, and much ill-defined but once lucrative 'influence' on the West Coast of Africa, where Holland, like most of the European nations, has scrambled for a trade which was variously described as ivory, gum, or gold, but which was always and substantially slaves.

The Dutch are not a decadent nation; on the contrary, they are probably as vigorous at the present moment as they ever were. But they do not owe the retention of their imperial position to their superior vitality: they owe it to the unexampled condescension of Great Britain; for the entire area of the present Dutch Empire has been twice conquered by England, and twice handed back to Holland. The reasons for this self-denial on our part will be given later.

If the empire of Portugal was a triumph of thought, that of Spain an empire of plunder and slaughter after the Oriental model, that of France a triumph of brilliant adventure, the empire of Holland has also its distinguishing characteristic—it is a miracle of shopkeeping. In its history we find no principles appealed to or applied that are beyond the range of the humblest linen-draper's intelligence. There are no striking figures in Dutch colonial history; the whole nation went as one firm into the business of empire as they might have gone into any other trade. They succeeded, and amassed

in that important trade immense wealth. But it is chiefly in their exclusive addiction to earning large returns on the capital embarked, and to their consequent neglect of the natives whom they exploited to their profit, that we shall find whatever grounds for reprehension there may be in the history of the empire of Holland.

First, of its rise. The sixteenth century found the Dutch a thrifty and thriving folk, living well among their dykes, in spite of all the hardships of their climate. They prosecuted a busy trade and cultivated the domestic virtues. They were not a very adventurous race, and not at all an imaginative. In commerce they delighted in quick returns and large profits; they were content, under protest, with small profits, but the returns must be quick. They were very good traders on commission, and quickly absorbed almost the whole of the distributing business of the wealthy empire of Portugal. They had not the distinct national existence that they have now, and have had for some centuries past, their mother-country being only a part of the

Low Countries, and each State semi-independent, like those of the Swiss. The basis of their character was a steady, not to say stubborn, conservatism, and a loyalty to their rulers that ranked next only after religious conviction.

No race more unlikely to embark on the dangerous, the exciting, but eminently gambling, business of empire-making could possibly be imagined. What force, one might well ask, could possibly stimulate such a people to embark on the race in which Portugal and Spain (such very different countries from Holland) had up to the rise of the Dutch Empire won all the prizes?

We know from Mr. Motley's works how tremendous was the force applied to mould the Dutch into a nation—a nation not only separate, but adventurous and belligerent. It required nothing less than the scourge of Philip's tyranny to move them. This solid and stolid people, who asked nothing better than to remain for ever the most loyal and devoted of Philip's subjects, found themselves under the necessity of choosing

between submission (which meant extinction) and conquest (which implied empire, if they chose to snatch the prize).

The quarrel of course was religious. These heretics (or assertors of the rights of conscience, whichever phrase you will), stung by the scorpion lash of Alva's intolerable despotism, sprang at their master's throat. This 'people of butter'—as Alva in his Spanish pride and Turkish ignorance had called them—flung off the yoke of Spain, conquered her, trampled on her, and despoiled her, and built up for themselves a wealthy and stable empire out of her depredations. Wealthy and stable: these are words to conjure with, with Dutchmen. It was not gorgeous, it was not imposing. It was so little magnificent, that its very existence is often at the present day overlooked; but it was and is, even in its shorn condition, eminently remunerative.

Such, then, are, in brief, the conditions under which the empire of Holland took its rise. It was conceived in rebellion and nourished on piracy—noble rebellion and

justifiable piracy, if you will, but still rebellion and piracy. That it should have arisen at all is remarkable ; but the direction in which Holland expanded, and the character of her imperial work, are alike hardly less remarkable.

The rebellion was against Spain, the piracy was directed against Spain ; but it was so directed, without apparent rancour or bitterness, and in a discriminating and (so to speak) methodical manner, that is in every way exceptional.

When the Dutch Empire took its rise, the whole known world outside Europe was in Spanish hands. The original Spanish Empire had been of immense extent, but had been entirely confined to the Western Hemisphere (with the trifling exception of the small Spanish acquisitions in the South Seas). Since the year 1580, however, it had been doubled in extent by the absorption of the whole Portuguese Empire into the empire of Spain, and the Portugo-Spanish Empire thus added included the whole of the known East —the known East added to the known West

made a universal empire on which the Dutch might prey at will. 'The world was all before them where to choose.'

It is true that there remained over and above the extent of the Spanish and the Portugo-Spanish Empire the whole continent of North America. In exploiting and exploring this immense and unknown territory, France and England were at this moment throwing off their first crop of adventurers. Experiments were almost yearly being made by both nations; but experiments were not much in the Dutchman's way, still less adventure.

If he was to cross the ocean and risk his life by sea and in unknown lands, it would not be in search of adventure or that he might make experiments. He did, indeed, as we shall see, make one settlement on the Atlantic coast; but, in the modern phrase, 'there was no money' in North America. The same sagacious, if not very lofty, instinct that deterred him from experiments in the North American continent also overcrowded any natural desire that he may have had to

wreak his vengeance on Spain by directing his piracies on the old Spanish Empire in Central and Southern America. The Spanish Empire was essentially military, and though the Hollanders did not shrink from fights when they were unavoidable, they preferred spheres of action that were peaceful as well as profitable. Moreover, the profits of the Spanish Empire were precarious. Looting is an affair of hours, and all the loot of Mexico and Peru had long since been collected and spent. There remained the mines—profitable indeed, but essentially gambling securities. The Dutch turned aside from the original Spanish Empire of the West towards the Portugo-Spanish Empire of the East.

Beyond the fact that both these extensive empires were now subject to the Crown of Spain, there had been no attempt to amalgamate them, or to fuse interests that had from the commencement been kept rigidly distinct. Portugal and Spain, both religious nations, had scrupulously observed the Papal award which gave the East to one and the West to the other. Even for purposes of

convenience, Spain made no attempt (while the empires were still distinct) to intrude on her neighbour's territory. Slaves, for example, were necessary to her for the development of her American estates ; but she did not attempt to acquire, either by purchase, settlement, or conquest, any posts on the West Coast of Africa to serve as bases for a slave supply. She left the lucrative business of supplying America with blacks entirely in the hands of the Portuguese—in obedience to the Papal award.

This was just the kind of trade that attracted the Dutch, and we accordingly find them settled on the rock of Goree, off the West Coast of Africa, between the Senegal and the Gambia, as early as the year 1617. Another yet more lucrative, and much less dangerous, trade was that of the Spice Islands, on which Holland had long cast envious eyes. The goods were of small bulk and very precious, owing to the limited supply. Both spice trade and slave trade were, of course, in the hands of the Portuguese, and must be acquired by force. Moreover,

the spice trade implied the possession of islands at the uttermost parts of the earth. Naval superiority was, therefore, the first indispensable condition for the absorption of the Portuguese Empire by Holland. How great that naval superiority rapidly became we shall presently see ; but in the meantime we may note that the Dutch Empire had none of the characteristics that we should have expected it to possess when we reflect on the sinister circumstances attending its origin.

Considering that the Dutch had only just emerged from the hellish ordeal of Philip's tyranny, we should expect to find them burning with violent and disorderly passions. If they were capable of any great constructive effort we should expect to find their empire taking the shape of a series of strong naval stations from which they could swoop down and plunder their enemies. This was not at all what happened. They emerged from their great trials almost unaltered in character, and they promptly and methodically set to work to build up a great trading

empire, apparently almost uninfluenced by considerations of revenge.

They started with many advantages. The Portuguese, who could fight stoutly enough for themselves, fought but languidly for a foreign master, and they had recently succumbed to the same tyranny that Holland had just thrown off. The Portuguese were depressed; the Dutch flushed with their successful resistance to Spain. Moreover, the Dutch were much better sailors. The early trade to the East had been carried on in very large slow-sailing ships. There were good reasons for this; the long voyage, with uncertain ports of call, necessitated careful provisioning, and large crews must be carried to meet the accident of a fight. The Portuguese had made very little progress in naval architecture, and they were at the mercy of the Dutch.

The Dutch have followed somewhat in the wake of the Portuguese in this matter. We can still—on the rare occasions when a Dutchman sails through the Downs—study the type of vessel with which Holland fought

her way to the Spice Islands two centuries and more ago. It is difficult to realize that these leisurely if eminently seaworthy craft, whose lines have hardly changed since the days of Van Tromp, were in the days of the rise of the Dutch Empire the smartest ships afloat.

When the Dutch turned their thoughts eastwards it was in vessels not much heavier and slower than these that they sailed. At that time they were in the forefront of progress in the matter of naval architecture, for they had been fighting for a whole generation in the narrow seas where handiness was everything, and fighting for national existence. Consequently, when little fleets of vessels like this fell in with a Portuguese galleon, the Portuguese had no chance; it was the Armada over again on a small scale wherever Portuguese and Dutch came into collision.

These, then, are the conditions under which the Dutch Empire developed. They had a decided naval superiority, and the enemy in occupation of the wealthiest portion of the

earth's surface was feeble and dispirited. There was no discovery to be done; for by the time that the Dutch entered on their Imperial career the road to the East, and even the Far East, was almost a beaten track. There is very little individual enterprise to be recorded, and the Dutch owe next to nothing to that source of strength; the whole nation marched, so to speak, along the road eastward to the Spice Islands.

They established themselves at Goree; they settled at the Cape of Good Hope; they ousted the Portuguese from Ceylon; they threw off side settlements in the Indian Peninsula; and they expelled the Portuguese from the whole of the wealthy archipelago, known as the Spice Islands.

Thus the shape that the Dutch Empire takes at its height is this: there is a large group of possessions—Java, the Moluccas, the Celebes, Malacca—where the natives were not formidable, where a small garrison could hold each island or group with ease, and where each could come to the help of a neighbour when threatened. This group

is strong, as well as compact. It is situated at the farthest extremity of the earth's surface from Europe, and can, consequently, only be attacked by a powerful naval expedition. Such an expedition must be prepared to fight every stage of the voyage, or else be prepared to sail the 12,000 miles without putting in anywhere; for all the ports of call are in Dutch hands, and firmly held—Goree, the Cape, Ceylon. This is a very strongly cemented chain of possessions, and its commercial value was simply what the Dutch chose to make it; for the produce of the Far East was grown nowhere else, and the whole of the Far East was Dutch.

It was not a dangerous exploit, for the Portuguese were not vigorous opponents. It was not an adventurous exploit, for the road was clear and well marked out before the Dutch entered on it. It was a rich prize easily won, and over the whole there hangs a certain flavour of the commonplace, which is hardly, perhaps, to be wondered at when we come to consider the way in which the Dutch looked on their newly-won dominions,

and the manner in which they exploited them. But we must not underrate it. It was, no doubt, a remarkable achievement for so small a people. It will appear still more worthy of attention when we quit the task of narrating where and how the Dutch displaced their predecessors, and enter on an examination of some of the circumstances that attended their expansion of Holland.

There were, as we have seen, no difficulties of the kind encountered by Portugal and Spain ; difficulties of discovery, or the difficulty of dealing with powerful native kingdoms already established in the lands to be acquired. Had the Dutch, then, no difficulties to face ?

They had difficulties and great ones ; but their difficulties were quite different from any experienced by the Portuguese or Spanish, and arose entirely in consequence of the Dutch entering so late on their career of expansion.

The Portuguese and Spaniards explored at their ease. They had no rivals, and so they had time to make mistakes and profit by them, to remedy their blunders, and to

begin again. But the Dutch had no sooner started than France and England were close on their heels.

Thus, although Holland commenced to lay the foundations of a Colonial Empire at one and the same time in North America, in the West India Islands, on the West Coast of Africa, in the continent of India, and in the Far East, she was quickly compelled to give up most of these enterprises by the encroachments of her neighbours. It was not that the individual Dutchman was in any way the inferior of the individual Frenchman or Englishman ; it was simply that there were not in the aggregate enough Dutchmen to hold all these posts.

Considering their numbers the Dutch made a wonderful impression of universal empire. This was because they had no desire for conquest for conquest's sake—no ideal loftier than the enrichment of Dutchmen. If they had wasted their strength in attempting the conquest of India or Brazil they would rapidly have sunk to the position of an insignificant European Power, without

any external relations worth mentioning. But they attempted no such Quixotic enterprises, and the consequence was that they made such a show of strength that France and England were only too thankful to leave to the Dutch the trade of the Far East, provided that they could acquire some share of the trade of the rest of the world.

For it so happened that the kind of trade that the Dutch monopolized was just that which most aroused the jealousy and covetousness of both France and England—the carrying trade.

Just as, while their trade was confined to Europe, the Dutch had become the great distributors of the Continent, so when they entered on their career of imperial expansion they aimed at, and in fact conquered, the carrying trade of the ocean.

But just as the prudent investor buys, in times of peace, shares in a small-arms manufactory, so the Dutch, foreseeing perhaps the jealousy that their predominance in the carrying trade would arouse, set themselves from the outset to make a second string to

their bow. This was their trade with the Far East, of which they had, from the commencement of their successful assaults on the Portugo-Spanish Empire, the exclusive monopoly.

This trade it was that remained longest in the hands of the Dutch, this empire it was that was twice conquered and twice restored by England. The other possessions of Holland, which were snatched from her comparatively early, were posts established by her for the sake of the convenience of her carrying trade.

It was in defending these latter outposts that the weakness of Holland, in point of numbers, became so grievously apparent.

By far the most famous of all, the most wealthy potentially and the most interesting, was the settlement on the Atlantic coast known as New Amsterdam. In this part of the continent there were, in those days, no opportunities of acquiring wealth rapidly. In Africa the natives, if savages, were at any rate savages with whom a profitable trade could be carried on. In North America the

case was different. Those precious goods of small bulk—ivory, gold, gum, spices—that so attracted the Dutchman were not to be had. The slow processes of agriculture, and (while the population remained scanty) still slower processes of petty commerce, were the only roads to wealth. For these reasons comparatively few Dutchmen went there. No very powerful military establishment was kept up. There was, therefore, nothing to counterbalance the very great advantages that a naturally prolific and pushing race would have over one more conservative and of fewer numbers. The English, French and Dutch were all early established on the mainland of North America; but whereas the French, from their greater numbers (and also from their being separated from the English by a natural boundary) long disputed the domination of the continent with the English, the Dutch were, from the outset, in a much more unfavourable situation.

Their colony of New Amsterdam was hemmed in by English settlements. After

half a century of European immigration, the Dutch population was probably not one-seventh of the English. Plainly so great a disparity of forces could end in but one way at the first outbreak of hostilities.

It was only in the forbearance of the English that the Dutch could look for a long continuance of their own power.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the English, so far from feeling indulgently towards the Dutch, were intensely jealous of them on account of their predominance in the carrying trade. To this feeling we owe the Navigation Laws of Cromwell and the Dutch Wars of Charles II. It was in the year 1664 that the nascent Dutch Empire in North America was destroyed at a single blow, and the colony of New Amsterdam converted into the colony of New York.

A far more serious blow befell her, at about the same time, in the loss of the slave trade dependent on her station of Goree on the West Coast of Africa.

This trade, as we have seen, was carried

on by the Portuguese, and the Spaniards made no attempts to snatch at it. Even when the Portuguese were ousted by the Dutch, and the Spaniards found themselves, in consequence, face to face with the necessity of choosing between slaves purveyed by rebels and heretics or no slaves at all, they acquiesced peacefully in the transfer; either out of continued respect for the Papal award, or from native sluggishness, or from the tardy conviction that the Dutch were more than a match for them. This trade, then, passed into Dutch hands. They supplied their own small settlements in Guiana and the Brazils with slaves, and they also supplied the Spaniards. With Goree—lost first to the English and recovered from them, and finally lost to the French—went their best station for this purpose.

Thus, when the seventeenth century was three-quarters past, the Dutch were overmastered in both North and South Atlantic waters. What they retained—Guiana and Curaçao—in actual possession did not make up for these very heavy losses.

Had the Dutch not reduced into possession the whole of the Portuguese Empire in the East and Far East, their position would now have been a very insignificant one, for their settlement at the Cape represented very much what St. Helena and Ascension now do for British shipping.

For a century and a quarter after the fall of New Amsterdam the old order of things continued, and then the French Revolution broke out, bringing with it the most astounding changes of fortune for Holland and her Colonial Empire.

During all this time the Dutch were undisturbed in their distant possessions in the Pacific. Spain and Portugal had dropped out of the running; France and England were fiercely stabbing each other wherever they could—chiefly in Canada and India—and left the Dutch alone.

As the time of the Revolution drew near, however, it began to be seen that France had had the worst of the long struggle. In North America, indeed, she was a little more than quits; if she had been expelled

from Canada, she was chiefly instrumental in expelling England from the rest of the Continent. But her losses in India remained unavenged; there was nothing to set off against the ruin of all her gorgeous schemes of Eastern Empire.

Moreover, it was plain that even in the West Indies her position was most insecure.

Such was the situation of France; she was still eager, still ambitious, although constantly baffled. We shall see how she made two tremendous bids for a world empire before the Great Peace. In the meantime, we may profitably consider the use that Holland made of this long period of untroubled Eastern rule. I have ventured the position that the Empire of Holland was a miracle of shopkeeping. It is not intended to imply that there is anything to be deplored in an empire being conducted on sound business principles. On the contrary, it is better that it should be so: certainly far better for the happiness of its subjects that the dominant idea of empire should be that of peaceful

development rather than of rapacious warfare.

Nevertheless, there are degrees of devotion to gain. The English, who are continually denounced as shopkeepers — men, that is, who have no sense of responsibility towards their Eastern fellow-subjects, and look on their vast dominions as so many estates to be exploited for the greatest possible advantage of England, and of England alone — may profitably study the records of the largest shop ever kept — the Dutch Empire. It was an extensive and complicated business. It will be impossible to do more here than to glance at a single incident which is typical.

The Dutch owned, as we have seen, the two islands of Ceylon and Java. These islands have no imaginable connection, racial or geographical, and they are separated by about 1,500 miles of sea. Their material interests must necessarily be entirely unconnected. Fate brought them both under the yoke of Holland. Their new masters did indeed study local conditions with some

attention, but it was in order that they might make the greatest possible profit for themselves, not in order that they might administer each island to the greatest advantage of its inhabitants.

The great difficulty in Ceylon was the rice supply, which was always short, and sometimes brought the Cingalese perilously near to a famine. Rice is a wet crop, and often requires for its cultivation irrigation works that are much beyond the power of the ordinary farmer to carry out. Building tanks, for instance, cutting canals and damming streams. These works are throughout the East regarded as proper objects for Government care. The native rulers of Ceylon had done, if not their duty, at any rate something towards this work. We should expect to find the Dutch energetically taking up the work, and making up for lost time as quickly as possible.

The Dutch, however, did nothing of the kind. They did not construct new tanks, nor repair those that the ravages of war had damaged; they allowed tanks to fall into

disuse wherever possible. We wonder at so cruel a line of policy until we realize that it is all simply a matter of business. The sufferings of the Cingalese were nothing to the Dutch; they were not there to please the Cingalese. As for rice, that was a Java crop; and an immense population of half-starving Cingalese was the best possible market for the Java houses; they made vast fortunes out of every scarcity.

It would certainly have served no useful purpose to waste large sums of money in constructive works in Ceylon, the only effect of which would have been to lower the profits of the Java houses; that would not have been at all good business. In Ceylon itself the Dutch made money out of cinnamon; so it was clearly understood that Java was to serve the rice ring, and Ceylon the cinnamon ring.

It would hardly be precise to describe this course of action as cynical; for the Dutch, with all their virtues, do not appear to have had a glimmer of an idea that there could be any higher duties connected with their

position than to make as much money as possible out of it.

But it is, nevertheless, a most extraordinary example of heartless manipulation of the interests of great populations to the advantage of a few capitalists. When England grows conscience-stricken as to whether she is really doing her duty by India, it might be comforting to read for a while the records of Holland's work. It is not savage cruelty of the Spanish type that we encounter in Dutch administration, it is only a dull and sordid tyranny. Of course, every great empire has its characteristic vices as well as virtues. The Dutch were pacific, but in revenge they were relentlessly greedy of money. The time was coming when this immense fabric was to be broken up from its foundations.

On January 27, 1795, the Stadtholderate was declared to be abolished, and the Batavian Republic established. The Prince of Orange fled from Holland, and was accommodated with apartments in Hampton Court Palace. By the middle of April the English withdrew

the forces that they opposed in Holland to the advance of the Revolutionary forces.

Holland was virtually absorbed into the French Republic, just as one hundred and fifteen years earlier Portugal had been absorbed into Spain. The immense territory over-seas that was known as the Dutch East Indies, together with the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon, fell into French hands, and became the natural prey of those with whom France was at war.

Such measure as Holland had meted out to Portugal might now be expected to be measured to her again by England. Ruthlessly and relentlessly had Holland despoiled Portugal, and she now herself fell into the clutches of a Power that is incessantly denounced as greedy and grasping.

On September 23 the Cape fell. The commander-in-chief of the expedition bore a letter of recommendation from the Prince of Orange desiring that there might be no resistance, but it was disregarded.

Already in August the English had conquered Malacca. On February 15, 1796,

Ceylon was captured. In the next year the wealthy prize of the Moluccas fell into our hands; three years later we reduced Dutch Guiana, and in the following year Curaçao. There remained to Holland nothing but Java, and even Java was isolated and cut off from communication with Europe.

The empire of Holland was now indeed in a parlous state. The mother-country, as the Batavian Republic, was in dependence (thinly disguised as alliance) on her powerful neighbour, France. Abroad all was lost, East and West, the route to the East gone, and Java only remaining Dutch. Even Java must soon fall in the natural course of events.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century an observant Dutchman must have felt that there was little hope of a revival of his country's greatness. There could be no more rings in cinnamon, rice or coffee—at any rate, for Dutchmen. The days were gone for ever when fat fortunes could be laid up by the sweating of Javanese or Cingalese. The outlook was hopeless; for into whose

hands had the Dutch Empire fallen? Into the hands of England.

Nevertheless, at the Peace of Amiens, concluded in the year 1802, the entire area of the conquered Dutch Empire was restored to Holland with the one exception of Ceylon; no doubt there are many who think that we ought to have restored Ceylon also.

To appreciate the true bearing of this course of action we must endeavour to realize what was the situation of England at this time. The war that closed at the Peace of Amiens had been from the outset directed, on the part of France, to securing the route to the East. This was doubly secured by France; she held the Cape route by virtue of the Dutch 'alliance,' and the Egyptian expedition of Napoleon was to secure the Mediterranean route. There is no doubt whatever of her objective; although in our fathers' days there were many who held that there was no proof of the Emperor's animosity to England. Dazzled perhaps by the second empire, they maintained that our grandfathers' view of Napoleon was a mere

craze, and that we should have done better to ally ourselves with him.

What chance there would have been of our alliance being accepted we can see from the correspondence of the time. 'As for Egypt,' the Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to Buonaparte on September 23, 1797, 'as a colony it would supplement the products of the West Indies, and as a route it would give us the commerce of India; in business, time is everything, and the time saved would give us five voyages instead of three only by the ordinary route.' The ordinary route was the route round the Cape of Good Hope.

At that time, of course, the Cape had already passed away from French control; but the way in which they regarded the Dutch possessions is well illustrated by these lines from Buonaparte to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, September 13, 1797: 'Supposing that at the general peace we were obliged to restore the Cape of Good Hope to England, we should then have to seize Egypt.' Neither the Minister nor the

General makes a pretence that the Cape of Good Hope is to be regarded as anything but French ground. This, then, was the situation : France was making two determined attempts to get at India, stretching one long arm round the south of Africa, and thrusting another along the Mediterranean to seize Egypt and the Red Sea. Both attempts were defeated; the first by the simple capture of the Cape of Good Hope; the second in a more complicated manner. The battle of the Nile shut up the French in Egypt, and cut them off from France; the capture of Malta and Minorca confirmed our grip on the route eastwards, and the march of Baird through the desert with his Indian army completed the disaster.

When the time came for making peace, both routes to the East had fallen into our hands, and both were surrendered. This may be called ignorant, or short-sighted, or cowardly, but it cannot with any show of reason be called greedy. The menace to India was as plainly demonstrated as any policy can be; and yet we were contented to

run that terrible risk a second time. We made only two reservations. The first was Ceylon. The campaign of Suffren had proved what havoc might be wrought to India by a hostile fleet possessing a base in that island. As the Dutch were plainly unable to defend themselves against the French, to retain Ceylon was the smallest measure of self-defence that we could take. Accordingly we retained Ceylon; we simply did not dare to leave so strong an outpost to India in such feeble hands. All the rest of the conquered Dutch Empire was restored to Holland; as to which all that can be said is that it was a piece of extravagant generosity.

The only reservation that we made in Europe was as regards Malta. Egypt we evacuated; Minorca we evacuated. As to Malta, all that we asked was a material guarantee that it would not be occupied by the French as soon as our backs were turned. The guarantee was not given, and war broke out again. There are Englishmen who hold that the guarantee never ought to have been demanded; and that throughout the negotia-

tions England behaved very badly to Napoleon, who meekly endured our exactions until he was pushed beyond endurance.

This point is a little beside our subject; but the fact remains that when the last stage of the great struggle commenced, it found Holland once more a world-power. Unless we start with the assumption that England cannot under any circumstances do a good deed, and that what would be generous in another power is merely selfish or crafty in England, we shall have to conclude that the revived Empire of Holland was a free gift from England. The war broke out again then, and the processes of the earlier war were repeated. Surinam was captured in 1804, the Cape of Good Hope in 1806, Curaçao in 1807, the Moluccas in 1810, Java in 1811. This time the conquest was complete; not an acre remained to Holland outside Europe. We are to observe, further, that these conquests, with the exception of Surinam, were made from France direct, and not from Holland. Early in the year 1806 Louis Buonaparte was formally proclaimed

King of Holland. The entire extent of the Dutch Empire became French soil, and as legitimately open to English attack as the Portuguese Empire had been to the attack of Holland when Portugal was conquered by Spain.

In the earlier war there had been at first some hesitation on the part of England. The situation was equivocal; for we were not at war with Holland. The Stadtholder was the guest of George III., and recommended his officers to hand over their provinces to England. Later on, the situation cleared up, as the Dutch refused to follow their Stadtholder's advice. In the second war the situation was, almost from the outset, clearly defined. For the second time in the course of ten years, Holland suffered the fate of Portugal; her Empire was engulfed in that of a powerful neighbour.

On this occasion not even Java held out; and for the second time the Dutch Empire was in the grasp of England, who restored the entire area to Holland with the exception of the Cape of Good Hope. No doubt

there are many who will hold that we ought to have restored the Cape of Good Hope also.*

We did not, however, do so; but kept in our own hands the control of the route to the East round the South of Africa. This was the only loss suffered by Holland at the Great Peace. To-day finds us also in Egypt, having taken close upon a hundred years to master our lesson.

We have now arrived at the last stage in the history of the Dutch Empire. If its rise and development were surprising, not less so were the closing episodes, which left it, as regards the Far East, intact after all its vicissitudes.

The Colonial Empire of Holland is the sole considerable Empire of the modern world that has a continuous history since its foundation. Batavia, founded in the year 1619 as the capital of the East Indies, is the capital of the Dutch East Indies to-day, and the area of the Dutch Empire

* England, having conquered the Cape of Good Hope from Louis Buonaparte, paid Holland six millions sterling for the privilege of retaining that conquest and Guiana.

there has not shrunk in the course of three centuries.

The present Colonial Empire of France, vast in extent though it is, is a creation of this century only—even of the last half century. With the exception of the French West Indies, it has but a very short history. The Empires of Spain and Portugal are so sadly shrunken—the one in consequence of extravagant misgovernment, the other in consequence of dreadful disasters—that it is hardly fair to compare them with the great and wealthy possessions of Holland, although the Portuguese possess in Goa, and the Spaniards in Santiago de Cuba, a link with a more distant past even than the foundation of Batavia.

That Holland should occupy to-day the unique and very favourable position of a small nation ruling a considerable empire, is owing to the fact that she had the good luck to fall into the hands of England. It was not that she had an overflowing population, for she remained to the end a little people. It was not that her stock was more martial

than that of her rivals, for her colonies fell at once and almost without a struggle over and over again.

The Dutch Empire had very little resisting power; it was swallowed up by France as easily as Portugal was swallowed up by Spain. But the Portuguese Empire was exposed by its misfortunes to the assault of a Power flushed with successful rebellion, and just entering on its course of expansion, whereas when the turn of Holland came, she fell into the hands of a Power that was too grand and mighty to care about unsought additions to her possessions. We have also to note the long period of peaceful development enjoyed by Holland; this was not enjoyed by her because she was stronger than her foes, but because France and England were perpetually at war, and unable to make any great efforts outside the two classic arenas of their conflict—Canada and India.

In the dealings of England with the Dutch Empire we no doubt come across a great deal of blameworthy ignorance as to its value.

But even in that ignorance there is a certain nobility. Besides, when we say that England was ignorant of what she was restoring, that is only one part of the story. Our ministers may have been unaware of the value of the colonies that they were handing back to Holland, but they were quite aware that they were being asked, and pressingly asked, to hand back something. They failed in their duty departmentally, by not making more sure of what they were doing.

But, however we may distribute personal blame, there still remains the extraordinary fact (the fact so important to Holland) that her empire was twice handed back to her when (especially the second time) she could hardly have expected to regain any portion of it.

What led England into a course without example in history will always be a matter of dispute. Some there will be who will affirm that England deserves no credit for declining to despoil a defenceless neighbour, her action being simply the outcome of departmental

inadvertence. Others will maintain that it was from a genuine desire not to impoverish an old friend that we relinquished the Dutch Indies, East and West, and that our action was a very generous one.

But whether the mainspring of our action towards Holland was indifference or generosity, it is submitted that it certainly was not greed.

VI.

CONCLUSIONS.

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THE British Empire is not lost yet. But there is no reason why it should not be if it is sufficiently mismanaged. It was not founded by a miracle; and we must not expect that a miracle will ever be wrought to conserve it. Hence the value to Englishmen of the study of empires that have in the past been won and lost.

The situation of England at the present moment is exactly analogous to that of Portugal immediately before her collapse. Portugal had no men; England has no food. For a whole generation before the disaster of 1580 it was becoming increasingly plain, year by year, that unless some governmental measure were adopted to keep

men in Portugal, the steady drain of men to the East would at last bring about a crisis. That crisis would be nothing more nor less than this: that Portugal might be overflowingly rich, and yet completely defenceless. The necessary measures were not taken, and Portugal fell in a fortnight. Had time been granted her she could have made a respectable defence, but Spain had no intention of throwing away so valuable an opportunity, and time was not granted to Portugal.

In England it has been growing increasingly plain, for the last twenty years at least, that unless some governmental measure were adopted to get grain into the country and keep it there, the time would come when the country would be within measurable distance of starvation. The time has come. It is not a question of whether this or that Power or combination of Powers would be malicious enough to cut off our supplies. We need not discuss the question as one of hostile import if we do not wish to do so; for the situation would be almost the same if a universal treaty of arbitration were in full

operation. The point is, that by the failure of two harvests there would not be food enough on the planet. It would not be a question of England being able to get at it or not; the food would not be there.

The obvious remedy is, since we have so much good wheat country, to grow the food ourselves. But for some reason England is doggedly opposed to doing anything of the kind. It is one of the most singular crazes known to history. Future historians will make infinite merriment over a nation that called itself practical, and yet pursued a policy that at one and the same time made it the most envied nation in the world, and cut off all its sources of the first indispensable material of war.

For it is not that food is among the necessary munitions of war: it is the first and indispensable munition of war. Having got our men, we must feed them before they can fight; surely that is the A B C of warfare.

The cheap and easy task of describing what would happen if some unfriendly Power

chose a time of scarcity to declare war has been so often performed that it is unnecessary to perform it again here. But surely writers on that subject take too roseate a view of what would happen to England under those circumstances. It is generally assumed that by paying a sum of money—one thousand millions, two thousand millions, or some colossal sum—we could put an end to our miseries.

Such a stipulation would be a waste of paper and ink; for one thousand millions could as easily be extracted from Iceland as from England with her empire gone. Any power that had the good luck to get her fingers round England's throat in this way would not be so foolish as to let the opportunity slip of throttling her once and for ever. We saw what Philip did to Portugal when the opportunity came for which he had so long waited. Supposing the worst possible to have happened, and England, with her forty millions of starving folk, to be ringed round with hostile cruisers.

The enemy would be lacking in common

sense if he helped us out of our difficulties, for he would not get such an opportunity again. That such a course would be 'inhumane' is saying very little to the purpose. 'When I go to war,' said the grim old Marshal, 'I pack up my humanity, and leave it behind with my wife's kit.' Perhaps the enemy might go so far as to relieve our distress to the extent of 'assisting emigration' to what would then have become her colonies.

These are gloomy reflections. But they were stern realities (substituting 'men' for 'food') to Portugal three hundred years ago, and there is, in the nature of things, no reason why they should not become realities for England. Our case is exactly analogous. With time we could, of course, get out of our difficulties; but time is precisely that which will not be allowed to us, any more than it was to Portugal.

The usual reply (when these considerations are urged) is that this Power or the other 'would never' take a course of action that would entail a disagreeable consequence to

herself—temporary loss of trade for example. Considering the immense value of the British Empire there are surely several nations who would gladly suffer not only a slight and temporary, but a very substantial loss for the purpose of helping to loot us, and would be amply repaid if they succeeded.

No doubt the same things were said in Portugal when any 'alarmist' pointed out the Spanish danger. Two such faithful sons of the Church 'would never' fall out; neighbours who had learnt for many centuries to know and respect each other 'would never' have a difference that could not be amicably adjusted; their external interests were perfectly distinct, one to the East, the other to the West, under the award of the Holy Father.

Latterly, especially, since Portugal had shown herself so militantly orthodox, the countries had drawn much closer; orthodox Philip could not but respect and admire a country that showed such praiseworthy zeal for the good cause. Finally, the material interest of Spain, plainly, was to keep

Portugal intact. Quite apart from spiritual or racial affinities, the mere promptings of self-interest would deter Spain from breaking up the whole fabric of the Eastern trade. She 'would never' dislocate an entire system of commercial connection from which she herself derived so much benefit with no greater advantage in view than the acquisition of more territory, when she had too much already.

'Was für Plunder!' sighed old Blucher with tears of regret in his eyes as from the peaceful vantage ground of S. Paul's Cathedral he surveyed the City of London. 'Was für Plunder!' says the world of to-day, but with more of anticipation than regret in her voice, as she surveys the vast and wealthy extent of the British Empire.

But we lose sight of things as they are when we assume that nations only go to war from nicely-balanced reasonings of self-interest. It is mostly from outbreaks of popular passion, unreasoned anger unreasonably insisted in, that modern nations go to war. Cabinets are, in fact, a good deal

hampered in resisting impulses of this kind on the ground that the war is not to the nation's interest; for in declaring war they always have to make out that it is with the utmost reluctance that they find themselves driven to advise their master to take such an awful measure. The catchword varies in every case—the honour of the flag, the fatherland, the cause of orthodoxy—these are some; but never self-interest. In being told that our friends 'would never' do anything so contrary to their own interest as to declare war against England we are being told that they 'would never' do that which, as a matter of fact, every nation professes to be doing when she goes to war.

Portugal fell by reason of ignoring facts that were glaringly obvious. The food supply is one such in the case of England. Another is, that there are too many people in England and too few in the Colonies. England could easily spare a few millions; the Colonies could as easily swallow them up—even more easily if they rightly understood their interests. The statesman who

should set a current of immigration flowing into the vast waste-lands of the South would do more to strengthen and enrich the Colonies than the discovery of a gold-mine could effect.

There is one other source of strength that Englishmen possess, of which, so natural does it seem to her, she would never be conscious unless by studying the lost empire of Portugal: it is that they do not mix freely with their Eastern fellow-subjects. This is often made a reproach to them, with the usual adjectives, haughty, unsympathetic, and others more severe still.

But we have but to see how grave was the diminution of force that the abounding sympathy of Portugal brought to her, to recognize at once what a source of strength to us is our so-called haughtiness, which is really nothing more than instinctive common-sense.

The contemplation of the lost empire of Spain ought to be one of unmixed consolation to England; for we have avoided all the mistakes that Spain made. We are so accustomed to our own attitude of complete

toleration of all the creeds (some so strange to us) of our empire, that we have come to look on toleration as the rule, and intolerant action as the exception. That is an entire mistake. Spain was grossly intolerant; so, in her decadence, was Portugal; France half strangled her own promising colony of Canada by shutting out all immigrants except those of one faith. We should do well to remember, now and then, how inexhaustible is the source of strength to the empire implied in the word toleration.

It is quite a delusion to suppose that persecution always fails. If applied with sufficient vigour and relentlessness, it is often completely successful. The crushed worm does not turn if you tread hard enough. But it is, after all, only a very narrow kind of success — from the point of view of this world—that can be attained by persecution. If 'success' is held to imply the stamping of one form of religious belief on the minds of the people, that measure of success can be attained. In this sense Spain was completely successful. But if we inquire the price of her

success, we shall find that it was a price that England will never be persuaded to pay; for it is the moral and intellectual ruin of the people. Besides these considerations, the material ruin of the people is an inconsiderable incident; but that, too, follows in most cases.

With our awakened sense of the illuminating value of history, and the great importance of a knowledge of the past as a guide to the present and the future, we cannot help feeling that the scrupulously careful conduct of England in the East is a legitimate source of pride. Let us consider what the Spaniard destroyed, and what the Englishman has preserved. Temples, legends, faiths, languages almost, customs, creeds, all the varied and intensely picturesque and instructive incidents of an old civilization—all were shrivelled up in the devastating breath of the Spanish fury. All have been religiously preserved and protected by England to the utmost of her power. Cavillers will say that this is no more than our duty. Granted—fully granted:

but the Spaniard thought that he was doing his duty also. The question is, Whose sense of duty is the higher?

There is nothing that is French that may not be studied with profit; not even the French Colonial Empire. We are accustomed to remember with complacency that we owe nothing, or next to nothing, to our ministers, and that our own empire contrasts favourably with others like it, chiefly because it is almost entirely the work of the people. No doubt: but we may profitably consider how much the French achieved, in spite of the difficulties caused by an almost complete lack of popular support. For England it would appear that, just at present, and in several directions, the questions awaiting decision are precisely those that can be solved by the patient consideration of experts rather than by popular impulses. Let us remember, then, how nearly French intelligence beat us out of Canada, with all our numbers in our favour. There are several most important policies awaiting settlement that are absolutely incapable of solution

except by conferences of experts, who will bring trained intelligence to bear on the tangled web of conflicting interests.

Impulse is invaluable while empires are being made; but in later stages intelligence is indispensable. Intelligence will but rarely make a country expand into an empire; but no work of consolidation can be achieved without a very liberal measure of intelligent and concerted effort.

The most difficult task for the conscientious hesitator—one sometimes fears that it is an impossible task—is to bring himself into that state of mind in which the Commons of England resolved that 'Robert, Lord Clive, hath at the same time rendered great and meritorious services to his country.' If he really merit the name of 'conscientious,' let him in conscience' name study the Lost Empire of France. Let him remember Champlain perpetually kept in the background, De la Salle unsupported, Bussy thwarted, Labourdonnais dying of a broken heart, Dupleix neglected and ruined, Lally dragged through the streets of Paris on a hurdle; and let him

remember that Canada and India were lost to France because of these misdeeds, wrought, for the most part, in the solemn name of justice.

When we have the good fortune to have a great man among us, let us at least be great enough ourselves to know him for what he is. If we are looking for a great man who is blameless, we are looking for the Messiah. But we can find plenty of men among us who are neither great nor blameless: they are the common stuff of humanity. Although there is something intensely gratifying to ordinary mankind in catching a great man tripping, it is not really a grand discovery that we have made. All men make slips, but most men are small enough to conceal them. The truly grand attitude of mind is reached when, having judged, men can bring themselves to say that 'Robert, Lord Clive, hath at the same time rendered great and meritorious services to his country.'

It has not been possible, within the limits of this volume, to give more than a hint of the way in which Holland regarded her

Colonial Empire; the entire volume would be too scanty a space to devote to that most instructive study. It would show Englishmen how far a great people—a really great people—can misapprehend the nature of an empire. As in every other way, we are continually being reminded how far short we fall in the task of 'doing our duty' to our fellow subjects. No doubt we do fall short: but, at any rate, we acknowledge that we have a duty; and that is more than Holland ever recognized. If we do not do so much as we might do towards increasing their happiness and prosperity, we do, at any rate, admit that their happiness and prosperity is our goal; and not the enrichment of Englishmen by every possible means, and at any cost of suffering to those subjects of the Empress who are not Englishmen. Base though this aim may be that (as we justly pride ourselves) is not ours, it was nevertheless the aim of a nation that we are continually exhorted to admire and bow down to.

Those who think about the British Empire at all fall roughly into four classes:

1. The Jingoes.
2. The reasonable Imperialists.
3. The conscientious hesitator.
4. The Little Englanders.

In good times the second class outnumbers all the others put together, but not very largely, and in troubled times the Jingoes are a dead weight, and the Little Englanders a danger. The balance is decided by the attitude of the conscientious hesitators, who are drawn upwards or downwards by all sorts of considerations, but who are constitutionally open to the very able appeals that the Little Englanders make to their conscience.

These determined foes of our country, numerically insignificant, are powerful by reason of their pertinacity and recklessness, and by the influence that they exercise over the hesitators. Their appeals are most adroitly made, and are always covered by that most attractive mask, the mask of noble and unselfish aims. They are never abashed, never disconcerted, never discouraged, and it would not be accurate to say that they do not mind what damage they cause, for their

object is to cause damage. Their grand source of strength is the ignorance of their dupes, an ignorance which is not to be wondered at, nor easily overcome, for no questions are so complicated as those of Imperial policy, and some are only fit to be debated by experts. Nevertheless, they are all thrown into the arena of party strife: that is one of the drawbacks to our otherwise successful method of government.

With this exception, and also with the exception of the dangers noted earlier in this chapter, the story of the lost empires is of rather favourable omen than otherwise to the British Empire of to-day. As a rule, the first sign of an empire's decline is the failing vitality of the parent stock. Never before in our history have we been so variously and so healthily active as at the present moment. The vitality of England appears to be not only sustained at a high level, but to be exuberant, inexhaustible. The nation has even undergone unscathed the severe test of twenty-five years' education. There are weak points, no doubt, here and there,

but none—beyond those already indicated—that seem likely to become malignant dangers—none, at any rate, at home.

Abroad there are some that may be very dangerous indeed. In India there are two, one affecting the Civil Service, the other the Army. The army has been treated with particular cruelty, but it is one of the most re-assuring features of our political system that abuses are not permanently overlooked. It may take a long time to fix upon them the requisite amount of attention to secure their remedy; but the remedy is in the end secured, although, perhaps, more slowly than under a more vigorous administration.

The position of the Civil Service is peculiar. Next to the Army it is the chief pillar of Anglo-Indian rule. Forty years ago it was not supposed to be overpaid, and yet in the last forty years pay has fallen sixty per cent., owing to the fall in silver; prices have risen perhaps forty per cent., and the work has trebled. There is no fear that Englishmen will not always get through as much work as they possibly can, whether their pay be

magnificent or barely sufficient. But every man has his tether, and if he has to spend his time in mountains of correspondence his time is gone, and it may be open to question whether it has been spent to the best advantage. That was a fine phrase, that every Englishman should bear himself in the East like an Ambassador of the Empress—a perfect definition indeed; but who ever heard of an Ambassador in a hurry? and when was a modern civilian in anything but a hurry?

The drift of this observation, of course, is that so much of our authority in the East depends on the personal contact of English and Asiatic. It was this that inspired Sir John Malcolm's instruction to the service that they should live, in the Eastern phrase, 'with four doors open': be of perfectly easy access to every native; for to listen to a man is sometimes as good as granting him what he prays for. All this invaluable personal intercourse must of necessity be restricted or, which is as bad, hurried over, if a man is nervously anxious to finish his last report on

a scheme that need never have been promulgated. That invaluable basis of our influence, perfect mastery of the native tongues, must needs be weakened if office work is so heavy. These are not fatal weaknesses, but they are weaknesses. They tend to enfeeble the grip of the district officer over his district. The East is the same as it always was, and the Oriental does not understand the man in authority being hurried like an overworked telegraph clerk. He likes to see his great man take his ease affably, and will not approach him at all unless he can get a few minutes' easy chat.

If the work has increased the pay has diminished. There are only two ways of paying men—in money or in honour. The money pay is less than half what it was, and for honour, by which is here meant decorations, and all the little points of precedence and formality that are as the breath of their nostrils to some men, Englishmen as a rule care nothing at all. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that they profess to care nothing at all, whereas in reality they

care a great deal. This insincere attitude of mind is due partly to the grapes having so long been sour—English decorations until quite recently having been very scarce and reserved for grandees. It is partly due also to the misunderstood teachings of some social prophets. There remains the Englishman's preference for substantial reward, which forms the residuum of a feeling that is probably on the decrease on the whole. It still persists, however, and makes one more difficulty when we come to consider how to get the superlatively good work of the civil service for about one-half of the proper pay. That illustrious service, once standing so high in honour and emolument, is now greatly shrunken in both. Yet it is to a great extent on the efficiency of that service that the British Empire in India rests.

As to foreign attacks, there is scarcely a doubt that, sooner or later, it will come. Into the struggle for empires all nations have now entered, some of whom are quite unfitted for empire even if they achieved it, and some are of already demonstrated incapacity.

Nevertheless, they will not be left behind in the race if they can help it. The greater reason for England to be, more than ever, the strong man armed. The greater reason for her to be of one mind, so far as possible, so that when the hour of conflict strikes, the trumpet shall give out no uncertain sound. Then there will be, at least in our days, no lost empire of England. But there might have been had our foes struck twelve years ago. Twelve years ago there is hardly a doubt that we might have been 'rushed' successfully. It was not that the army was weak, for it is always weak; it was not that the navy was lamentably below strength: it was that the very soul of the nation seemed sick. We seemed to have neither heart nor head left to us. Every form of sentimentalism raged abroad unchecked; the voice of common-sense was drowned; the people seemed bewitched. We lived in an inverted world; duty was derided, loyalty was a superstition, war a wickedness, the law of the land an intolerable burden.

Then came the crash in Egypt; the

campaign of 'almost mythic grandeur' in the Soudan, and the tragedy of Khartoum; and still the people babbled on.

At the height of the brabble the voice of a Cambridge professor made itself slowly heard. In language of frozen impartiality he bade us remember what were the issues of which we talked so lightly; what were the tremendous interests that we were preparing, as the phrase went, to 'throw into the cauldron.' Under this exhortation men looked eastward to the Soudan, where the rule of the Khalifa reminded them of the consequences of duty forgotten and responsibility shirked. Perhaps, after all, there might be something to be said for the old teaching of home and school that for Englishmen duty comes first.

Men looked at home; and some phrases that once sounded so alluring sounded hollow to their ears. Some reputations, once so high, seemed overrated; some figures that once loomed so large to their eyes flickered and grew dim and unsteady, as if seen through a bloody mist.

As the sense of individual duty towards the millions who dwell under the sceptre of the Empress grew stronger, the nation grew less flighty. Times mended; and, from the year of Jubilee onwards, the chances of the foes of the empire have grown yearly slighter and more uncertain. But let us not, in our revived sense of security, forget where honour is due. Let us not fail to remember that thousands who now give a loyal and sometimes clamorous applause to the Imperial ideal, owe their inspiration (although perhaps unconsciously) to the genius of Sir John Seeley.

INDEX.

THE END.

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