

The Capture of New Amsterdam

HISTORICAL writers have condemned the English for the capture of New Amsterdam, on the grounds that the seizure occurred at a time of profound peace and that England robbed Holland of New Netherlands.¹ Without proposing to clear the English of all blame in the matter it may be suggested that the verdict needs further consideration.

The fruits of the victory over the Armada did not fall exclusively to the English. While the political and religious struggle in England during the first half of the seventeenth century made an aggressive commercial policy impossible, the Dutch were more and more securing control of the trade with the New World and the Further East, and by the middle of the century were the recognised carriers of Europe. It was not until the triumphant puritans had been compelled to create a navy, in order to clear the seas of royalist privateers, that England was in a position to dispute the commercial and maritime supremacy of Holland. But the war which began in 1652 between the Commonwealth and the United Provinces did not arise primarily from competition in the field of trade. It was due first of all to the failure of the English embassy to secure an alliance of the two republics, and secondly to the right of English privateers, which had obtained letters of marque and reprisal, to bring into English ports Dutch vessels suspected of carrying French goods. The Plantagenet claim that the English, as the rulers of the narrow seas, should be honoured by the dipping of the flag of foreign shipping was also a disturbing factor. The Navigation Act had been passed at a moment of irritation against the Dutch, and thus was indicative of the growing estrangement of the two powers rather than a direct cause of the war. 'We are about to attack a mountain of iron,' said a Hollander as he thought of the struggle, 'while the English will attack a mountain of gold.'² The war revealed to England the vulnerable character of Holland's

¹ Broadhead, *History of the State of New York*, i. 735; Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, iv. 407; Andrews, *Colonial Self-Government*, p. 80.

² Aitzema, *Saken van Staat en Oorlogh*, iii. 721.

naval supremacy and the value of her trade, and at its close in 1654 the current of English life was so strongly in favour of commercial development that Cromwell would not include the repeal of the Navigation Act in the terms of the treaty of peace. The national antagonism which had been engendered by the war was perpetuated by the determination of the Protector to insist on the observance of its provisions.

After the treaty, but before the end of the year 1654, two Dutch ships had been seized by an English man-of-war for carrying prohibited goods to England,³ and in January 1655 the expedition to the West Indies under Penn and Venables arrived at Barbadoes and seized fifteen Dutch vessels which were trading contrary to the Act.⁴ The infringement of the Navigation Act by the Dutch was made all the more easy because English customs officers conspired with the Dutch to break the law. In 1657 the Greenland Company complained to the Protector that whale and fish oil and fins had been imported in large quantities through the venality of the customs officers, and requested an order to stop the abuse.⁵ Fraser Ash, governor of the Muscovy Company, informed the Protector in October 1657 that his company was on the point of losing its trade in oil and fins because of the success of the Dutch in evading the Navigation Act.⁶ In May 1658 a petition was presented to the Protector, signed by more than a hundred ship captains in and about London, complaining that the Navigation Act had been broken, that many English ships had been laid aside, and that trade was chiefly carried on in foreign-built ships navigated by strangers.

The Dutch eat us out of our trade at home and abroad ; they refuse to sell us a hogshead of water to refresh us at sea, and call us ' English Dogs,' which doth much grieve our English spirits. They will not sail with us, but shoot at us, and by indirect courses bring their goods into our ports, which wrongs not only us but you in your customs.⁷

The Dutch navy even had a share in the illicit trade ; landing below Gravesend, they discharged their goods, and the English customs officers were not permitted by the Dutch to interfere.⁸ On the other side Hollanders who had not broken the Navigation Act found that their ships might be taken by the English. On 9 February 1655 a Dutch ship of Edam, while at anchor under Portland Castle, was seized by an English privateer. On 3 May

³ *Calendar of State Papers, Dom.*, 1654, xci. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.* 1655, xcvi. 63, 108 ; Col. 1574-1660, xii. 49 ; *America and West Indies*, sec. 213.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Dom., 1656-7, cliii. 118.

⁶ *Ibid.* 1657, clvii. 57.

⁷ *Ibid.* 1658-9, clxxxi. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.* 1659-60, cciv. 12.

the council ordered that the ship should be returned to her owner, because she was laden with merchandise for persons in Holland; but by 31 May the order had not been executed, for on that date the owners presented their claims through Nieupoort to the Protector.⁹ The case of the Edam ship did not stand by itself; from time to time the Dutch ambassador presented the claims of the Dutch who had lost vessels at sea captured by the English.¹⁰

The treaty of 1654 had provided that all ships of the United Provinces should strike their flags and lower their topsails whenever they met any vessels of the Commonwealth. On 30 July, the treaty having been signed on 5 April, Captain William Cochraine, of the British navy, in command of the 'Old Warwick,' met a fleet of Dutch merchantmen off the Lizard, convoyed by a Dutch man-of-war: The merchantmen struck their topsails, but the man-of-war refused to do so. On 7 August Captain Cochraine also met twenty-six Dutch merchantmen bound for the Mediterranean, and, as they did not strike their colours, fired thirty guns among them before they submitted.¹¹ On 26 November 1657 Admiral Opdam, with a fleet of about thirty sail, came in near Dover and struck his flag to the castle and the English man-of-war 'London;' the Dutch vice- and rear-admirals followed suit. But afterwards the Dutch fleet met two vessels of the English navy, to which they were unwilling to strike; and when told that the English ships would sink by his side unless they did so the Dutch admiral 'caused his flag to be furled in a great rage and so kept it until he was out of sight of the ships.'¹² In December 1657 Robert Vessey, captain of the English man-of-war 'Constant Warwick,' while cruising off the coast of France to protect English merchantmen, was forced by stress of weather to put into St. Martins in the Isle of Rhé. There he says that he

was much affronted by three Holland men-of-war, who wore their flags and caused their merchantmen to do the like, to the disgrace of our nation. At their going out I weighed after them, and when in the road fired twice at their flag, when the admiral replied; had not night prevented I had resolved to sink by their sides rather than they should have continued in their pride, my men being all free to lose their lives rather than suffer abuse.¹³

When war broke out between England and Spain in 1655, it was not surprising that the Dutch accepted Spanish commissions, which, in accordance with the international law of the time, permitted them to prey upon English commerce without giving

⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Dom.*, 1655, xevi. 7, 20; xevii. 108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 1655, xevi. 7; xevii. 181.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 1654, lxxiv. 39.

¹² *Ibid.* 1657-8, clvii. 153, 154.

¹³ *Ibid.* 1657-8, clviii. 3.

England grounds for war against Holland. Holland too was the source of the Spanish ship supply, and Dutch ships flying Spanish colours were found in the Spanish service. In 1659 Captain Marvin, of the English merchantman 'Recovery,' homeward-bound in the Mediterranean, was attacked a few leagues off Leghorn by three Spanish vessels from Sardinia. In the engagement which followed he was able not only to beat off the attack of the Spaniards but also to capture one of their vessels. The ship proved to be Dutch-built and commanded by a Dutch captain whose father was part owner.¹⁴ In a similar manner Englishmen took advantage of the war between Sweden and Denmark, in which Holland supported the Danes, to accept Swedish commissions against the Dutch. The Protector issued orders to prevent the capture of Dutch vessels; but opposition to Holland and English commercial interests in the Baltic were so great that vessel after vessel belonging to the Dutch was brought into English ports by English privateers.¹⁵ Public opinion in Holland was very bitter against the English. Secretary Thurloe was informed by his agents on the continent that the exiled royalists were looking for a rupture of the peace between England and Holland and that the 'Zealanders are mad for war.'¹⁶ At the close of the revolutionary period Dutch-English antagonism, engendered by the war of 1652, had in no way been allayed. The infringement of the Navigation Act by the Dutch and the question of the flag had continued the national opposition in a time of peace, and had led the Hollanders to assist Spain against England and the English to enter the northern war in opposition to the Dutch.

The early years of the Restoration promised a change for the better. Nowhere was Charles II more cordially congratulated on the change in his fortunes than by the authorities of the United Provinces. At Breda, and later at the Hague, where he was the guest of the states-general, he was assured by De Witt of the friendship of the republic and offered an alliance for the promotion of their mutual interests. The English king expressed himself as more favourably inclined towards the republic than any of his predecessors had been, and as desirous of entering into such an agreement.¹⁷ Immediately after his departure for England Beverweert was sent after him to maintain the good understanding, and was able to report that the duke of York, Clarendon, Monck, and Ormond were all in favour of the alliance.¹⁸

The situation however was not without its difficulties. Before.

¹⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Dom.*, 1658-9, ccii. 58, 78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 1659-60, ccix. 45.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1656-7, cliii. 249; ccxix. 11.

¹⁷ N. Japikse, *De Verwikkelingen tusschen de Republiek en Engeland, 1660-5*, pp. 5, 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 45.

the prorogation of parliament in September 1660 the annual income of the king had been fixed at twelve hundred thousand pounds,¹⁹ and, as that sum was not sufficient to pay the current expenses of the government and to support the court,²⁰ Charles applied to Holland for the loan of two million gulden. Without doubt the loan would have been made had it not been that just at this time the passing of the Navigation Act raised the question of the commercial relations of the two powers. The new act was based upon the law of 1651, but, since that act had been broken more on the colonial than on the European side, the new measure prohibited all trade with the colonies except in English ships.²¹ If enforced it would strike a severe blow at Dutch commerce, and De Witt informed the English king that the feeling aroused by the passing of the bill was such that the money could not be raised, and the loan therefore must be temporarily refused. The matter never came up again, and Charles soon learned to look elsewhere for financial aid.²²

If the refusal of the loan was caused by the rival commercial interests of the two powers, it seemed to indicate that the conclusion of an alliance would be no easy matter. On 23 October 1660 the Dutch ambassadors arrived, with instructions based upon the 'Magnus Intercursus' of 1496. These instructions guaranteed to the inhabitants of the two countries free trade and equal fishing rights. In case of attack each power was to assist the other with men or money. An alliance with England on such a basis involved the repeal of the Navigation Act and with it the abolition of the whole system of protection whereby the trade of England was to have been encouraged. In their first letter to the states-general the ambassadors wrote that the king was in favour of the alliance, that parliament was not against it, but that the repeal of the Navigation Act could not be secured.²³ In another way the attitude of parliament was not encouraging. In December a bill had been introduced into the commons for the encouragement of the fisheries of the kingdom, which prohibited the Dutch from fishing on the English coast, throwing 60,000 inhabitants of the republic out of employment.²⁴ The ambassadors appealed to the king, to Clarendon, and to Ormond against this bill. Ormond promised to oppose the bill in the upper house, but that was not necessary, because parliament was dissolved on 29 December,²⁵ two days after the bill had passed the third reading in the commons. Meanwhile the alarm at the Hague was very great. The states-general

¹⁹ *Commons' Journals*, viii. 150.

²⁰ *Calendar of Treasury Books*, 1660-7, i. xx.

²¹ Statute of 12 Charles II, c. 18.

²² *Ibid.* pp. 66, 69.

²³ *Commons' Journals*, viii. 203, 228.

²² Japikse, p. 56.

²⁵ *Lords' Journals*, xi. 239.

resolved to inform Charles II that the republic was ready to defend the Dutch fishermen, if necessary, with the Dutch fleet; but news having arrived of the dissolution of parliament, the letter was not sent.²⁶

Whatever may have been the attitude of Charles and his advisers, public opinion, as expressed in the lower house, was opposed to the commercial interests of the United Provinces, and the same feeling appeared when the discussion of the articles proposed by their ambassadors began in December. The English commissioners objected to the article providing for the mutual defence of the two countries, because England as the greater power would be compelled to give disproportionate assistance in case of war. They also objected to the articles dealing with contraband goods, the most favoured nation clause, and the granting of letters of reprisal. But the greatest difficulty was the Navigation Act, the repeal of which in the present temper of the nation could not be effected. The negotiations revealed the divergent interests of the two powers. The republic desired to maintain her commercial position by trading freely with all the world, while England hoped to develop her commerce by a system of rigid monopoly.²⁷ In February 1661 it was apparent that the articles of the ambassadors could not be accepted, and in March the English commissioners made counter-proposals. They were willing to form an alliance which would guarantee the English in the possession of Dunkirk, but which would not give the republic any advantages in trade. The ambassadors had no power to treat on such a question and asked for further instructions. In April they were authorised to negotiate a treaty of peace only, and the alliance was, therefore, recognised as impossible.²⁸ The hopes which had been freely expressed less than a year before, that a close union of the two protestant powers might be made for mutual defence and for the promotion of mutual interests, had been shattered in consequence of the rivalry of the countries in the field of trade.

In the following summer Charles determined to accept the proffered alliance of Portugal, and desired, therefore, to see peace established between that country and the United Provinces. He offered his services to De Witt, and when the offer was accepted sent Sir George Downing to the Hague to act as intermediary. Downing arrived in June and took an active part in the negotiations between Miranda, the Portuguese ambassador, and De Witt. But from the moment of his arrival he acted on the supposition that the terms of the proposed treaty between the two countries were adverse to the interests of England, and asked Miranda to sign no treaty without the consent of the English king. His suspicions

²⁶ Japikse, pp. 72, 74.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 99.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 81.

were well founded. The treaty provided that the inhabitants of the republic should have the preference in the sale of the salt of Setuval as well as all trading privileges granted to the English. In both respects the treaty ran counter to that between Cromwell and Portugal.²⁹ Downing did not know that these two provisions were in the proposed treaty between England and Portugal, but he suspected that they were, and for the wily diplomatist that was sufficient. He opposed the treaty with all his power.³⁰ The Portuguese ambassador found himself in an embarrassing situation. On the one hand Downing urged him not to sign without the consent of the English king, and Charles himself wrote to Miranda expressing his dissatisfaction with the treaty. On the other hand Miranda's instructions were to conclude the treaty with all possible haste, and De Witt threatened to break off negotiations if ratification were delayed. Miranda proposed that the treaty should be signed with a proviso that compensation should be given to England in case it contained terms contrary to the treaty between England and Portugal. Finally, without securing the consent of England, as Downing desired, the treaty was signed on 27 July 1661.³¹

The commercial antagonism between England and the United Provinces had prevented the formation of an alliance of the two countries, and had caused Downing to oppose the conclusion of a treaty between the republic and Portugal. The relations of the two maritime powers in the summer of 1661 were, therefore, far from friendly. Although the feeling in England against the republic was in some quarters intense the statesmen of the Restoration could not seriously resolve on making war against the small but powerful neighbour across the Channel. England was without a strong ally on the continent; there was no money in the treasury, no munitions of war; and, worst of all, according to Clarendon, commerce languished. Peace was needed, especially for trade.³² In the republic the conditions were reversed: the fleet was in good order, new ships were building, the magazines were full, and commerce was flourishing. Yet no more than England could the Dutch afford to risk the hazard of war. France could not be depended upon, and the time had not come for association with Spain; moreover the commercial loss of the war with the Commonwealth was not forgotten. If the commercial interests of the two powers had prevented the formation of an alliance, possibly that same interest might induce them to conclude a treaty of peace.

In July 1661 the English commissioners proposed the terms of such a treaty. These terms were partly taken from the treaty

²⁹ Lister, *Life of Clarendon*, iii. 134, 137.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 125.

³⁰ Japikse, p. 121.

³² Lister, iii. 168, 170.

of 1654 between the two states and partly consisted of new propositions. Of the latter the most important was one which provided for the creation of a commission to settle all disputes between the two countries; others required that the judges of Charles I should be surrendered, that justice be done for the Amboyna outrage, and that in case of a denial of justice letters of reprisal should be issued. The ambassadors accepted the draft, but objected to the additional articles. The question of the regicides must be treated separately, and they expressed their astonishment at the revival of the Amboyna question, which they supposed had been finally settled in 1654.³³ But the article providing for the establishment of a commission required time for consideration, and it was not until September that the ambassadors were ready to report, and then they objected to the settlement of claims in that way. Charles replied that he was willing to extinguish all claims in India before 10 January 1659, if claims after that time could be determined by commissioners.³⁴ This proposition was reported to De Witt, and the states-general accepted the principle of mutual extinction of claims before 1659, but did not commit themselves to the appointment of a commission to settle disputes after that date. The states preferred that the governments should attempt a settlement and in the event of failure that the subjects in dispute should be determined either by the regular judges or by commissioners, according to the nature of the case.³⁵

While the two powers seemed unable to agree upon the question of the commission other matters arose which impeded the conclusion of a treaty. Captain Bankert, of Zeeland, had taken an English caper on the grounds that the vessel had a Portuguese commission, and the king's council ordered the seizure of the largest Dutch man-of-war in an English port. The ship of Captain Block, which was lying at Gravesend, was seized, and not released until the ambassadors assured the king that justice should be done.³⁶ At the same time arose the question of the two ships 'Experience' and 'Charles,' English vessels taken by the Netherlanders in 1660. In both cases the ships had been confiscated by the admiralty of Amsterdam for having attacked Dutch vessels. Downing desired to have the matter settled by commissioners; and in the case of the 'Experience' this desire was granted, but the commissioners soon ceased to meet because of a dispute on a question of ceremony. In the case of the 'Charles' the admiralty of Amsterdam was merely ordered to make an investigation.³⁷ The failure of the republic to satisfy the claims of the English owners caused so much irritation in England that, as Clarendon assured the

³³ Japikse, pp. 110, 111, 163.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 169.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 174.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 170.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 177.

ambassadors, he had great difficulty in preventing the council from authorising the issue of letters of reprisal.³⁸

But in the spring of 1662 the states performed a service for Charles II which tended to some extent to counteract the effect of these incidents. The regicides had been excepted from the bill of amnesty which had been passed in the summer of 1660.³⁹ Some had been taken; others were in hiding in the republic. Since the passing of the bill attempts had been made to secure the latter, but without avail, because it seemed impossible to obtain an order for their arrest without at the same time giving them notice of the impending action. The regicides spent much time in Rotterdam, and it was possibly the municipal authorities who warned them of their danger. At last Downing bribed a certain Abraham Kicke, who was entrusted with the correspondence of the fugitives, to assist him in capturing them. Okey, Barkstead, and Corbet went to Delft in March 1662, and Downing hastened to take advantage of his opportunity. He secured an order from De Witt for the arrest of these men, and with a few English officers arrested them at the house of Kicke. Yet the municipality of Delft would not permit the prisoners to be removed from its jurisdiction until Downing had obtained an order from De Witt for their extradition; and then, not without danger of rescue from the sympathetic Hollanders, the men were conveyed to the coast and thence to England.⁴⁰

While this act of De Witt caused great dissatisfaction in parts of Holland it had the desired result in England. Charles II received the Dutch ambassadors with every mark of favour and wrote a letter of thanks to the states-general.⁴¹ It was of greater importance that the king and Clarendon showed themselves more compliant in regard to the treaty of friendship. They accepted the propositions of the states that some time should elapse before the appointment of commissioners, so as to permit of the settlement of disputes by the two governments, but they considered a year too long. On another question England increased her demands. The year 1659 had been agreed upon as marking the limit before which all claims in India should be abandoned, and the republic expected that the same year would be chosen as a bar on claims for damages done in Europe. But the English commissioner now proposed 4 March 1654 as the date, and the month of June 1662 was spent in fruitless discussion of the question. In the same month all ships of the United Provinces in English ports were seized by order of the admiralty on request of an agent of the Knights of Malta, who advanced the twenty-third article of the Union of

³⁸ Japikse, p. 177.

⁴⁰ Japikse, pp. 194, 197.

³⁹ Statute of 12 Charles II, c. 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 198.

Utrecht as the ground of his action. The ambassadors at once protested, assuring Clarendon that the order of Malta was not a member of the Union, and that, therefore, the law did not apply. Clarendon convinced the ambassadors that the affair would adjust itself, but great indignation was expressed at the Hague at what had happened. The seizure was considered as equivalent to an act of war, and the states demanded that the vessels should be released immediately and that the admiralty should be censured. The English government complied with the demands; and Charles II assured the ambassadors of his personal indignation at the seizure.⁴²

But at the same time the king demanded a speedy answer on the question of the *terminus a quo*, and gave an order for the building of twenty ships. De Witt was in favour of recalling the ambassadors, but he was supported by three provinces only; even Holland, when the estates of the province met in July, voted to yield to England on the point, and a few days later the states-general passed a similar resolution. For a moment however the question of the ships 'Bona Esperanza' and 'Bona Ventura,' which had been taken at a much earlier date, threatened to prevent a settlement, but in the end in this matter also the republic yielded, and consented to the exclusion of the two vessels from the treaty. Unfortunately it was not clearly understood how the claims of the English owners should be settled.⁴³ The treaty was signed on 4 September 1662.⁴⁴ Thus the hopes expressed in May 1660 had not been fulfilled. The proposed alliance of England and the republic was seen to be impossible as soon as the negotiations revealed the widely divergent policies of the two powers, and it was not until after more than a year of tedious negotiation that a treaty of friendship was concluded, which provided merely for the settlement of controverted questions. The result did not augur well for the future.

While in Europe diplomatists were attempting to adjust all difficulties between the two powers, abroad, especially on the coast of Africa, new controversies were arising, which would tax to the utmost the ability of statesmen to maintain peace. The Navigation Act prohibited all trade with the colonies except in English ships, and Englishmen thus fortified prepared to enter a field in which they were comparative strangers. The transportation of slaves to the New World was chiefly in the hands of the Dutch. An English African company had been formed in 1618 and reorganised in 1631, but its purpose had been to deal in the material products of Africa.⁴⁵ Cormantin and the river Cerberos, near Sierra Leone,

⁴² Japikse, pp. 208-9.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 223.

⁴⁴ Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, xii. 422.

⁴⁵ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1574-1660, secz. 20, 75.

were the chief factories; but there were other trading points, particularly at the mouth of the Gambia, from which the servants of the company were driven by Rupert in alliance with the Portuguese in 1652.⁴⁶ In the same year Cromwell sent a frigate to Africa to protect other ports from the attacks of the Dutch; but with what success is not known, for all evidences of English activity on the coast disappeared until the Restoration, when the Navigation Act, giving to the English a monopoly of the slave trade with their colonies, turned anew the attention of English merchants to the African trade. In November 1660 the earl of Marlborough proposed to make Jamaica the West Indian market for the sale of 'blacks;' and a month later, on 18 December, Charles II issued a charter establishing the Royal African Company, and gave to its members a monopoly of the slave trade with the English colonies.⁴⁷ The mission of Sir Robert Holmes to Africa in January 1661 was doubtless to look after the interests of the new company. On his arrival at the mouth of the Gambia in March he captured the islands from which the English had been driven in 1652, and of which the Dutch West India Company had since held undisputed possession.⁴⁸ The United Provinces made haste to protest against the seizure, and Charles II admitted that Holmes had acted beyond his powers and promised that justice should be done. When Holmes returned to England however, the king seemed to have forgotten his promise;⁴⁹ and it was not surprising that the Dutch should seek to readjust matters themselves. In December 1661 an attempt was made by the natives, supported by the Dutch, to drive the English from the Gambia islands; and the natives afterwards testified that they had been persuaded by the Dutch to declare war. The English were able to hold their ground.⁵⁰ In the same year also the 'Merchant's Delight,' on a trading voyage to the Guinea coast, was seized by the 'Amsterdam,' belonging to the Dutch West India Company; the ship and goods were confiscated, and the English, after six weeks' imprisonment in a Dutch African factory, were turned out to shift for themselves.⁵¹

The year 1662 opened with renewed activity; the company had secured additional ships for the African trade and now undertook to deliver negroes in the West Indies.⁵² When however the frigates 'James' and 'Charles' appeared off Comendo, an unoccupied port on the Guinea coast, the captain of the 'Golden Lion,' a Dutch man-of-war, would not permit the English to trade. The frigates then proceeded to Cape Corso, where an attempt was made to lay in a cargo of slaves. But the 'Golden Lion' had

⁴⁶ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1574-1660, sec. 383. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 1661-8, sec. 408.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* secs. 316, 328; *ibid.* 1574-1660, sec. 383.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 1661-8, sec. 177.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* sec. 205.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* secs. 304, 747.

⁵² *Ibid.* secs. 206, 287.

followed, and at the command of the captain the boats and goods of the English were seized and the men imprisoned.⁵³ The presentation of a remonstrance secured their release, but with the threat that, if the English should attempt to go ashore, they would all be taken to the Dutch governor as prisoners. At Tacorady and at Cabaca the English under the company's agent, Francis Selwyn, erected factories, but the Dutch laid claim to the places and attempted to expel the English by a trade blockade. When this failed John Valckenburg, director-general of the Dutch company, sent a protest to the English at Cormantin, claiming a monopoly of the trade of the coast and demanding the abandonment of Tacorady and Cabaca. If the English would not yield to reasonable representations they would be forced to remove the factories.⁵⁴ But Selwyn would not admit that he had no right to erect factories at unoccupied points on the coast, and this position was taken by the king. In August 1663 Charles II, through Sir George Downing, demanded the abandonment by the Dutch of the principle of monopoly, as well as reparation for the injuries which had been done to English merchants.⁵⁵ Such claims however the Dutch would not admit. Their action was not prompted solely by hostility to England; it was based, as they believed, on positive right. In the struggle for religious freedom Holland had won from Spain political independence in Europe and from Portugal control of the commerce of Africa. No interloper had disturbed the Portuguese; none should now disturb the Dutch. They opposed, therefore, to the claim of ownership, based upon occupation, that of commercial monopoly, founded upon conquest, and the victory of the one principle over the other would depend upon the strength which the supporters of each could bring into the field.

It was the dispute over the ships 'Charles' and 'James' which changed the relations of the two powers for the worse. During the spring and summer of 1663 there seems to have been no thought of a rupture with the republic, although new questions, such as the capture of the 'Oranjeboom' by an English caper, showed that the rivalry of the two powers was as keen as ever. But in the autumn Petrus Cunaeus, secretary to the ambassadors, who had remained in England after the departure of his masters, was informed by Secretary Morrice that in the future no communication from him would be received in the council. This change in attitude towards the representative of the republic was due, Clarendon said, to Downing's failure to secure the settlement of the principles involved in the case of these two ships.⁵⁶ This affair and the dispute regarding Tacorady and Cabaca illustrate the situation on the coast during 1662. Dutch opposition had been so great that the

⁵³ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1574-1660, sec. 383.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* secs. 467, 606.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* sec. 545.

⁵⁶ Japikse, p. 271.

Royal African Company was in financial distress; indeed, it was on the verge of bankruptcy. Not for a moment however did the promoters of the company intend to abandon their commercial enterprise. They determined rather to redouble their efforts. The stock of the company was valued at only one tenth of its nominal value, and the additional capital that was necessary to carry on the trade could be secured only by the issue of more stock. The company was therefore reorganised on a new basis; additional stock to the value of eighty-four thousand pounds was issued, and the old stockholders were given stock in the new company equal to one tenth of their old holdings. Creditors of the old company received one third of their dues in cash and the remainder in old stock; if they did not care to accept the offer they might have the assets of the late company. Six places on the African coast were chosen for the factories of the new company, the chief centre being Cape Corso, where the Dutch had not permitted the English to trade. The place was to be made secure by the establishment of a garrison of fifty English soldiers and thirty negro slaves; the other places were also to be fortified. Thus the second Royal African Company was launched on 10 January 1663.⁵⁷

In the early summer of 1663 the ships of the new company arrived upon the coast, and the English undertook to erect the factories at Comendo, Anashan, and the other points which had been selected for the trade in negroes. But the Dutch were as determined as ever. The factor for Comendo was told by the officials of a Dutch man-of-war that the English should not land, and when the natives came out in their canoes to trade with the English they were fired upon by the Dutch. The natives succeeded in fastening a few canoes to the English ship, but they were cut loose by the Dutch and an English seaman who interfered was wounded. At Anashan the English were not permitted to land; at Ardra the Dutch so intimidated the natives that they would not trade; Cape Corso, which was to have been the chief factory, with a garrison of eighty, was taken by the Dutch, and Cormantin was saved by the arrival of English men-of-war under Captain Stokes.⁵⁸ Thus the year 1663 had been as disastrous for the new company as the year 1662 had been for the old one. Reorganisation had been in vain. The merchants who had entered the African trade so eagerly at the Restoration discovered that it mattered little whether the Dutch were in actual possession of points on the African coast or not; they claimed the whole coast as theirs and were ready to prohibit English trade by force of arms. In a statement to the king at the close of the year the Royal African Company admitted that the

⁵⁷ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1661-8, secs. 407, 408.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* sec. 507.

year had been a financial failure; indeed, had it not been for the timely arrival of a few men-of-war the Dutch would have swept the English from the coast.⁵⁹ Evidently English commerce must be protected by English men-of-war, and in December 1663 Captain Robert Holmes was again sent to Africa for that purpose.

But the commercial interests of England had already brought New Netherlands within the field of vision. The second Navigation Act of the Restoration, which was introduced into the lower house and passed the first reading on 8 May 1663, was intended to remedy the defects of the act of 1660 by making the infringement of the law more difficult.⁶⁰ Debated from time to time, it passed the third reading in the commons on 13 June and was brought into the house of lords on the 19th, where it was at once referred to a committee of which Lord Berkeley was chairman.⁶¹ If it was not the parliamentary discussion on the Navigation Act, it was the general interests in trade of which that was an expression, that led the king to issue an order in council, 6 July 1663, requiring the colonial governors to enforce the act of 1660.⁶² But it was believed in England that the infringement of the act on the coast of North America was largely due to the presence of a Dutch colony midway between New England and Maryland, and the Council for Foreign Plantations gladly welcomed an English claim for New Netherlands. In 1661 the earl of Stirling had presented a petition to the king claiming the territory and complaining of the intrusion of the Dutch; but it seems not to have been considered until the discussion on trade in the summer of 1663, and a renewal of the claim led the Council for Foreign Plantations to examine the whole matter. At a meeting of which Lord Berkeley was president it was resolved to investigate the English title to New Netherlands, the intrusion and strength of the Dutch, and the means whereby they could be made to acknowledge English sovereignty or withdraw.⁶³ Among the colonial state papers is a document by an unknown author, who claims New Netherlands for the English by right of discovery, and suggests that the English occupation has been prevented by the Dutch. The language of the writer is violent and his statements are a gross perversion of the truth, but he perhaps expresses the feeling in official circles towards the close of 1663. 'Trade has been wrested from the English merchants, as may be seen by the Dutch returns of last year, 1662. This miserable state of English interests in that part of the world calls aloud for remedy, that they may no longer sustain the intolerable disgrace of

⁵⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Col.*, 1661-8, sec. 618.

⁶⁰ Statute of 15 Charles II, c. 5, sec. 4; *Commons' Journals*, iii. 487.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* viii. 480, 502; *Lords' Journals*, xi. 539, 568, 571.

⁶² *New York Documents relating to Colonial History*, iii. 45.

⁶³ *Ibid.* iii. 46.

submitting to the intrusion of such monsters and bold usurpers.⁶⁴ However shadowy may have been the English title to New Netherlands it was believed that claims for such title could be advanced, and the Dutch-English antagonism would not permit those claims to lie dormant.

Action was all the more likely because at the opening of the new year, 1664, war between Holland and England was considered possible. To the contest for trade, especially in Africa, was added a dispute at home. One article of the treaty of 1662 provided that neither state should permit enemies of the other to remain within its boundaries.⁶⁵ The Restoration had driven many republicans to Rotterdam, where they were conspiring with others at home for the re-establishment of independency; and Clarendon considered that the banishment of those men from Holland was included in this provision. Two years however had gone by and neither the states-general nor the estates of Holland seemed to desire to carry out the terms of the treaty. If the refugees could not be expelled they could at least be watched; and Secretary Bennet sent Edward Riggs to Rotterdam to report on their conduct. On 1 January 1664 he wrote that they hoped 'much from the difference with Holland,' and that they were shipping arms secretly to London.⁶⁶ Nearly a month after the recognition of this 'difference' the committee reported on New Netherlands. On 29 January 1664 Lord Berkeley, Sir William Coventry, and Sir George Carteret pointed out that Long Island possessed a population of about thirteen hundred Dutch and about one-half as many English. Men could be secured from New Haven, and other colonies would contribute. It would not be very difficult to subdue the Dutch or drive them out, if the king would send three ships and three hundred men; should he determine to proceed with the design letters must be sent to New England for assistance.⁶⁷ While, therefore, the discussion on trade and the infringement of the Navigation Act had first brought New Netherlands within the ken of the statesmen of the Restoration, it was not until Dutch opposition to English trade on the Guinea coast had caused the financial ruin of the African Company, and war between the two countries was considered possible, that a descent on a Dutch province seemed imminent. Possibly English loss in Africa was to be made good at the expense of the Dutch West India Company in the New World.

On 4 March 1664 Secretary Bennet was informed by letter from Rotterdam that the Dutch were building ships of unusual size in preparation for war with England,⁶⁸ and on the 12th

⁶⁴ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1661-8, sec. 822.

⁶⁵ Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, xii. 422.

⁶⁶ *Calendar of State Papers*, Dom., 1663-4, pp. 426, 663-4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Col., sec. 647.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Dom., 1663-4, p. 505.

Charles II issued a patent to the duke of York giving him and his heirs the territory about the mouth of the Hudson River.⁶⁹ Parliament met on the 16th, and the lower house was just in session, when, on petition from the clothiers, a committee was appointed to consider their grievances.⁷⁰ On the 26th the committee was also empowered to inquire into the reasons for the general decay of trade and the means whereby the same might be improved.⁷¹ A month later, on 21 April, after having 'devoted much time and pains' to the subject, the committee reported that the decay was due to the opposition of the Dutch, and that the matter should be laid before the king, with a request that he take speedy and effectual means to redress it. The house accepted the report of the committee and resolved to support his majesty with their lives and fortunes against any opposition whatsoever. This warlike tone of the house of commons found immediate expression in the house of lords, and the resolution of parliament was sent to the king.⁷² On the very next day, 23 April, royal instructions were drawn up authorising Colonel Richard Nicolls, Sir Robert Carr, George Cartwright, and Samuel Maverick to make a tour of inspection of the New England colonies, as the chief end of a mission to the New World, the possession of Long Island being of secondary importance. While the leaders of the expedition could determine whether or not the descent on the Dutch province should precede or follow the visit to New England the king rather preferred the former course.⁷³ It is probable that the attack upon New Netherlands, first seriously contemplated towards the end of 1663, when the promoters of the Royal African Company became aware of their loss on the African coast, was definitely determined upon, now that the king was sure of parliamentary support. On 28 April Charles replied to the vote and request of parliament; he thanked them for their action and promised to demand redress from the Dutch, and if that were not forthcoming he would rely upon the two houses for support.⁷⁴

Meanwhile Captain Robert Holmes, who had been ordered to Africa late in 1663, arrived at the mouth of the Gambia towards the end of January 1664. He had been sent solely in the interest of the African Company, and his instructions were to protect the company's property and to secure freedom of trade; if necessary he was to use force. It was but a step however from the defence of trade to an attack on the Dutch, especially if the English factors on the coast were to urge such a policy, and if the Dutch should

⁶⁹ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1661-8, sec. 689.

⁷⁰ *Lords' Journals*, xi. 581; *Commons' Journals*, viii. 530.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* viii. 537.

⁷² *Lords' Journals*, xi. 599-601.

⁷³ *New York Documents relating to Colonial History*, iii. 51-63.

⁷⁴ *Commons' Journals*, viii. 503; *Calendar of State Papers*, Dom., 1663-4, p. 573.

appear to be in possession of places to which the English might lay claim. Both motives possibly decided Holmes's conduct. On 23 January he seized the island of Goree, which was one of the important trading centres of the Dutch West India Company on the West Coast. He appeared before Anta in April, and determined in a council of war to make an attempt on the factory, because of 'the insolence of the Dutch upon the coast and the many ways they have taken to destroy his Majesty's subjects.' Anta fell. In May Cape Coast Castle, which had passed from the English to the Dutch probably in 1663, was retaken by the English at some cost, and again chosen as the chief factory. Early in May Anamabo and Adia, 'still detained in the hands of the Netherlands West India Company,' were taken.⁷⁵ If Holmes justified his conduct on the grounds that he was restoring to the Royal African Company trading points from which the English had been driven by the Dutch, the latter were sure to deny that the English had any rights on the coast, and would consider that the action of Holmes was an overt act of war. Holmes thus prepared the way for another African venture. The Royal African Company issued additional shares to the extent of thirty thousand pounds to provide more capital, and planned to equip eight vessels, to be escorted by as many men-of-war under Rupert. Some fifteen hundred men were impressed for the service. A letter from Norwich to London, under date of 24 October 1664, possibly represented the local feeling: 'There has been a press for seamen in all the towns of the country; by the countenances of the men they seem very willing to be employed. There would be volunteers enough against the Dutch if they were to be fought at home and not at Guinea.'⁷⁶

On the other side the United Provinces had determined to send Opdam, who was in command of the Holland fleet in the North Sea, to Africa to avenge Holmes's actions; and Van Goch, the Dutch ambassador, admitted in conversation in England that the Dutch commander had received such orders. It required no special insight on the part of the English to grasp the situation, and Rupert was ordered to Africa to prevent retaliatory measures by the Dutch. But when the two powers realised the imminence of a naval battle in African waters they mutually agreed to avert the danger by detaining their fleets in Europe.⁷⁷ Some surprise, therefore, was felt when it was rumoured in October that De Ruyter, in command of the Dutch fleet in the Mediterranean, had been secretly ordered to Africa; and the surprise passed into anger when the arrival of John Lawson, who had departed from Cadiz on 27 September, confirmed the report.⁷⁸ Whatever may have been

⁷⁵ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1661-8, sec. 737; Dom., 1664-5, p. 92.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 111.

⁷⁷ *Lords' Journals*, xi. 626.

⁷⁸ *Hist. Manuscripts Commission, Fifteenth Report*, Heathcote MSS., p. 167.

the reason for the detention of the fleets under Rupert and Opdam in Europe, Charles II believed that it was only a subterfuge whereby the United Provinces could send De Ruyter to Africa without fear of serious opposition; he knew that the English forts would be at the mercy of overwhelming numbers and felt that he had been outwitted and deceived. It was probably this incident that caused the struggle for trade on the Guinea coast to become a European war. The loss in Africa could be made good only by the seizure of Dutch ships in European waters, and early in November an order to that effect was issued.⁷⁹ War with Holland was considered a foregone conclusion, and parliament was summoned to vote the necessary supplies.

Such was the situation when the loss of New Netherlands became known in Europe. About the middle of May 1664 four vessels had sailed from Portsmouth and arrived late in July on the New England coast.⁸⁰ Colonel Nicolls must have followed the suggestion to proceed at once to Long Island, for it was only some three weeks later that he appeared at the mouth of the Hudson River. In reply to an inquiry from Governor Stuyvesant as to the reason for the appearance of English men-of-war Colonel Nicolls said that he had come to assert the English title to the lands, and summoned the governor to surrender. In the negotiation which followed Nicolls was peremptory, and Stuyvesant felt that the Dutch were unprepared; hence on 27 August New Amsterdam was peacefully transferred from the United Provinces to the English crown.⁸¹

On 6 November and again on 13 November Van Goch presented the grievances of the Dutch to the English king. It was the coast of Africa however, and not New Netherlands, which was accorded the foremost place in the discussion. Charles admitted that Cape Verde belonged to the Dutch West India Company and that in taking possession Holmes had acted beyond his powers. Van Goch was assured that an inquiry would be made and that justice would be done. Cape Corso was claimed by Charles by right of occupation, and Van Goch justly replied that the Hollanders based their right to New Netherlands on precisely the same grounds. Charles accused the United Provinces of preparing for war in time of peace, but was himself straining every nerve for the same end.⁸² When parliament met, on 24 November, the speech from the throne recited the course of events since the prorogation on 17 May, dwelling upon the moderation of the English and the aggressive policy of the

⁷⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Dom.*, 1664-5, pp. 70, 90.

⁸⁰ *New York Documents relating to Colonial History*, iii. 65, 66.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* ii. 250; iii. 70 ff.; *Calendar of State Papers, Col.*, 1661-8, sec. 788.

⁸² *New York Documents relating to Colonial History*, iii. 77-87; *Lords' Journals*, xi. 626.

Dutch. The secret mission of De Ruyter to Africa was declared to be the cause of hostilities, and the king believed that parliament would support him with an immediate grant of supplies, in order that the war might be pursued with vigour.⁸³ The members of the commons seemed as eager as the king; and on the next day, 25 November, they voted the unprecedented sum of two million five hundred thousand pounds for the war.

Late in September De Ruyter sailed for Africa, and on 13 October appeared off the island of Goree with some thirteen men-of-war. Such a show of force secured the place without a battle. Two weeks later the factory at Satalone was disabled and De Ruyter proceeded along the coast, capturing and blowing up factories almost at will. At Tacorady the Dutch were at first repulsed, on 25 December 1664, but, reinforced by negroes, they made a second assault, which ended in the burning of the town and the destruction of the factory. Anamabo suffered the same fate; at Comendo the factor alone escaped. At Cormantin, in January 1665, the negroes, under a native chief, John Cabessa, offered some opposition to the Dutch, but the English surrendered the place unconditionally.⁸⁴ By the end of January De Ruyter had made good the claim of the Dutch to a monopoly of the coast; and after placing the factory in a position of defence, probably without any knowledge of the loss of New Netherlands, he sailed, on 17 February, for the West Indies. The island of Barbadoes was not a possession of the English Company, but immediately under the English crown. Still on his arrival, 17 May, De Ruyter began an attack. The battle lasted from 10 A.M. until 3 P.M., when four of his vessels were so damaged that he was compelled to withdraw.⁸⁵ The course of affairs in Europe had kept pace with the events in Africa and in America. On 4 March Charles II issued the declaration of war, and on 3 June, in a naval battle which began off Lowestoft, the English fleet defeated the Dutch fleet and drove it across the North Sea into the Texel.⁸⁶

The capture of New Amsterdam by the English was one in a series of events which issued into the first Dutch war of the Restoration. The war itself grew out of the struggle for trade which was bequeathed to the two countries by the war of 1652. That contest was most intense on the African coast, and a descent upon New Amsterdam was not considered until Dutch hostility had ruined the Royal African Company. As early as the opening of 1664 war between the two countries was considered possible, but not until 23 April, under the influence of warlike news from Holland and popular opposition to Holland supported by parliamentary

⁸³ *Lords' Journals*, xi. 624-7.

⁸⁴ *Calendar of State Papers*, Col., 1661-8, sec. 980.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Dom., 1664-5, cxiv. 61; cxxxiii. 46; Col., 1661-8, sec. 953.

vote, was the order actually issued. The news of the fall of New Amsterdam arrived in Europe when war seemed inevitable, and thus was in no sense a cause of the conflict. The war was the contest of two nations struggling for the commerce of the world, and the fall of New Amsterdam was but one of many expressions of that commercial antagonism.

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