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# THE COMPANY OF ROYAL ADVENTURERS TRADING INTO AFRICA

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BY

GEORGE FREDERICK ZOOK

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
OF PHILOSOPHY

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## INTRODUCTION

The English commercial companies trading to the west coast of Africa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have practically escaped the attention of historical students. Doubtless this neglect is the result of the little importance which has until recently been attached to African territory since the abolition of the slave trade. Previous to that time the west coast of Africa vied with the East Indies for popular attention, and the English African companies often appeared to be but little less important than the great East India Company.

The cause for the popular esteem of the African coast during the earlier centuries was the intimate connection which the slave trade had with the development of the English plantations in the West Indies. About the middle of the seventeenth century the growing of sugar cane and other products in the West Indies began to open up enormous possibilities which, it was universally agreed, could be realized only by the extensive use of Negro slaves. At the restoration of Charles II in 1660 the English commercial class directly supported and assisted by the king's courtiers determined to secure as large a portion of the West African coast as possible. To reach this end they organized that year The Company of the Royal Adventurers into Africa. This decision at once brought the company into conflict with the Dutch West India Company, which, during the twenty years of domestic trouble in England, had all but monopolized the desirable portion of the West African coast.

It happened therefore that the Company of Royal Adventurers played a very important part in the events which led up to the Anglo-Dutch war of 1665-67. The war resulted in the financial ruin of the company which was in existence only about eleven years, at the end of which time

it was succeeded by the much larger and better organized Royal African Company.

It has seemed to the author as if the English African companies were a very profitable field of historical investigation. Therefore, the present dissertation on the Company of Royal Adventurers will be followed shortly by a history of the Royal African Company, 1672-1752.

For assistance in writing the history of the Royal Adventurers Trading into Africa I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the librarians, and officials of the British Record Office, the British Museum, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, the Rijks Archief at The Hague, and the Cornell University Library. To Professor R. C. H. Catterall, now deceased, I am greatly indebted for reading the manuscript of this book, and for many valuable suggestions. Above all, I wish to express my deep appreciation to my wife, Susie Zook, for her unfailing inspiration and her constant assistance in the writing of this book.

GEORGE F. ZOOK.

WASHINGTON,

February 10, 1919



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# THE COMPANY OF ROYAL ADVENTURERS OF ENGLAND TRADING INTO AFRICA, 1660-1672

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DUTCH AND ENGLISH TRADE TO WEST AFRICA

In 1581 the seven United Provinces of the Netherlands declared their independence of Spain. As the intrepid Dutch sailors ventured out from their homeland they met not only the ships of their old master, Philip II, but those of the Portuguese as well. Since the government of Portugal had just fallen into the hands of Philip II the Dutch ships could expect no more consideration from Portuguese than from Spanish vessels. Notwithstanding the manifest dangers the prospects of obtaining the coveted products of the Portuguese colonies inspired the Dutch to such a great extent that in 1595 Bernard Ereckson sailed to the west coast of Africa, at that time usually called Guinea. There he and the Dutch who followed him discovered that the Portuguese had long occupied the trading points along the coast, and had erected forts and factories wherever it seemed advisable for the purpose of defense and trade. The Dutch merchants and sailors turned their dangerous situation into an opportunity to despoil the weakened Portuguese of their forts and settlements in Africa.

On August 25, 1611, the Dutch made a treaty with a native prince by which a place called Maurée was ceded to them. In the following year they erected at that place a fort which they named Fort Nassau.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this, in 1617, they bought the island of Goree at Cape Verde from the natives in that region. Four years later the West

<sup>1</sup> Jonge, Johan Karel Jakob de, *De Oorsprong van Neerland's Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea*, p. 16.

India Company was formed, its charter including not only the West Indies and New Amsterdam but also the west coast of Africa. This new organization found much in the new world to occupy its attention but it did not neglect the Guinea coast. The Dutch realized that the African trade was indispensable to their West India colonies as a means of supplying slave labor. Hostilities, therefore, were continued against the Portuguese, who still had possession of the principal part of the African trade. In 1625 the Dutch made a vigorous attempt to capture the main Portuguese stronghold at St. George d'Elmina, which had been founded on the Gold Coast in 1481.<sup>2</sup> They were unsuccessful at that time but in 1637 Prince Maurice of Nassau with 1,200 men succeeded in capturing this base of the Portuguese trade.<sup>3</sup> In 1641 a ten years' truce was signed between Portugal and the United Provinces, but before the news of the truce had reached the coast of Guinea the Dutch had taken another of the Portuguese strongholds at Axim which, according to the terms of the treaty, they were permitted to retain. From these various places factories were settled along the coast, and treaties made with the native rulers. Furthermore, in the treaty of peace, August 6, 1661, the Dutch retained the forts and factories which they had conquered from the Portuguese on the African coast.<sup>4</sup> After the truce of 1641 and the peace of 1661, therefore, the Dutch regarded themselves as having succeeded to the exclusive claims of the Portuguese to a large portion of the west coast of Africa including a monopoly of the trade to the Gold Coast.<sup>5</sup>

Although it was the Dutch who succeeded in depriving the Portuguese of the most important part of the West African coast, the interest shown by the English in this region can be traced back to a much earlier date. In 1481, when two Englishmen were preparing an expedition to the Guinea coast, John II, king of Portugal, despatched an am-

<sup>2</sup> Gramberg, J. S. G., *Schetsen van Afrika's Westcust*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Jonge, *Oorsprong van Neerland's Bezittingen*, pp. 18, 19, 20.

<sup>4</sup> In return for this concession the Dutch evacuated Brazil. Dumont, J., *Corps Universel Diplomatique du Droit des Gens*, VI, part 2, p. 367.

<sup>5</sup> De Gids, "Derde Serie," *Zesde Jaargang*, IV, 385.



bassador to the English king, to announce the overlordship of Guinea which he had recently assumed, and to request that the two Englishmen should refrain from visiting the Guinea coast. Edward IV complied with this request.<sup>6</sup> Thereafter no English expedition to Guinea was attempted until 1536 when William Hawkins, father of the famous John Hawkins, made the first of three voyages to Africa during which he also traded to Brazil. Again in 1553 Hawkins sent an expedition to the Gold Coast. Near Elmina the adventurers sold some of their goods for gold, and then proceeded to Benin, where they obtained pepper, or "Guinea graines," and elephants' teeth. After losing two-thirds of the crew from sickness the expedition returned to England.<sup>7</sup> In the following year another expedition under Hawkins' direction secured several slaves in addition to a large amount of gold and other products.<sup>8</sup> Also, in the years 1555, 1556, 1557, William Towrson made three voyages to the Guinea coast, in which his ships were harassed by the Portuguese, who attempted to prevent them from trading. English cloth and iron wares were in such demand, however, that notwithstanding this opposition a lucrative trade was obtained.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning with 1561 Queen Elizabeth lent her influence and assistance to a series of voyages to the African coast. Not only did she permit the use of four royal vessels for the first expedition but she spent five hundred pounds in provisioning them for the voyage. The value of the goods sent to Africa in these vessels was five thousand pounds. According to the arrangement Queen Elizabeth received one thousand pounds, which sum was one-third of the profits.<sup>10</sup> In

<sup>6</sup> Hakluyt, Richard, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, & Discourses of the English Nation*, VI, 123, 124.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 145-162.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 154-177.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 177-252.

<sup>10</sup> Queen Elizabeth's profit may have been only five hundred pounds, as it seems likely that the five hundred pounds which she spent in provisioning the ships should be subtracted from the one thousand pounds which she received. Scott, W. R., *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720*, II, 6.

the year 1563 similar arrangements were made with the queen for another voyage to the Gold Coast, during which there was considerable trouble with the Portuguese. Notwithstanding this opposition the ships succeeded in returning to England with a quantity of elephants' teeth and Guinea grains.<sup>11</sup> In 1564, an expedition composed of three ships, one of which belonged to Queen Elizabeth, was particularly unfortunate. One of these ships was blown up, while the other two were attacked by the Portuguese and probably had to return without obtaining any African products.<sup>12</sup>

In these voyages to Guinea the English trade had been in exchange for gold, elephants' teeth and pepper. Trading for slaves had scarcely occurred to these early adventurers. Nevertheless, as early as 1562, John Hawkins sailed for Sierra Leone with three vessels, and there captured three hundred Negroes whom he sold to the Spaniards in Hispaniola.<sup>13</sup> The success of this voyage was so great that in 1564 there was fitted out a second slave raiding expedition in which one of the queen's ships, the *Jesus*, was employed. As before, Hawkins sold his slaves in the West Indies, this time with some difficulty, because the Spanish officials, who were forbidden to have any trade with foreigners, regarded the Englishmen as pirates.<sup>14</sup>

Again, in 1567, Hawkins was on his way to Guinea. By playing off one set of natives against another he procured about 450 slaves and once more set out for the Spanish Indies. Although at first the voyage promised to be successful, he was later set upon by a number of Spanish ships and barely escaped with his life and one badly wrecked vessel.<sup>15</sup>

Hawkins' voyages to Africa are worthy of note because he was the first Englishman to engage in the slave trade. To be sure, his piratical seizure of free Negroes broke all

<sup>11</sup> Hayluyt, *Principal Navigations*, VI, 258-261.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 262.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 7, 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 9-63.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 64-74.



the rules of honorable dealing long recognized on the African coast. As a result of his actions the natives held all Englishmen in great distrust for a number of years.<sup>16</sup> The unregulated method of carrying on the African trade, pursued up to this time, ceased to a certain extent when Queen Elizabeth granted the first patent of monopoly to the west coast of Africa, May 3, 1588.

The charter of 1588 gave to certain merchants of Exeter, London and other places in England for ten years an exclusive trade to that portion of West Africa lying between the Senegal and Gambia rivers. The great slave and gold producing country of the Gold Coast remained open to all traders. It was therefore evident that, instead of continuing the slave raiding projects of Hawkins, the company intended to resume the exchange of English manufactures for African products. According to its charter the company was not required to pay duties in England either on imports or exports.<sup>17</sup> Although nothing is known of the success of this company, the patent was regarded as of sufficient importance for the earl of Nottingham and others to obtain a continuation of the monopoly.<sup>18</sup>

Since the charter of these Senegal adventurers did not prevent anyone from resorting to the Gold Coast and the regions to the east thereof, two voyages were made to Benin, one in 1588 and another in 1590.<sup>19</sup> In 1592 certain English merchants received a patent from the queen authorizing them to trade to certain specified portions of Africa.<sup>20</sup> The trade to Africa continued in this desultory fashion until 1618. At that time a patent comprising the whole explored western coast of Africa south of the territory of the Barbary Company was granted to some thirty persons, among whom the most important was Sir William

<sup>16</sup> For example, the expedition of George Fenner to Africa in 1566. He had a great deal of trouble with the natives. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, VI, 266-284.

<sup>17</sup> Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, VI, 443-450, patent of Queen Elizabeth, May 3, 1588.

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Joint Stock Companies*, II, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, VI, 450-458, 461-467.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 102.

St. John, who was said to have built the first English fort in Africa.<sup>21</sup> In the early years their trade, which consisted in the exchange of English for African products, was especially unfortunate. Vessels were either lost or brought back small returns. After 1621 it was difficult to procure fresh additions of capital. To add to this trying situation, the House of Commons attacked the company's monopoly and, later, voted it to be a grievance. Thereafter, although the company sometimes issued licenses for the African trade, the interlopers, who resorted to Africa quite freely, usually did not deem it necessary to obtain them.<sup>22</sup>

The moving spirit of the next company, which received a patent in 1631, was Sir Nicholas Crispe, who had been a successful interloper during the life of the previous company. In 1624 he had built the first permanent English settlement at Kormentine. Although not incorporated, this company enjoyed for thirty-one years a monopoly of trade to all the region lying between Cape Blanco and the Cape of Good Hope. Just previous to the Civil War Charles I confirmed its charter for twenty years. The company's monopoly was looked on with disfavor by the leaders of the Puritan party, however, and in 1649 the company was summoned before the Council of State, where it was accused of having procured its charter by undue influence. Later, the company's case was considered by the committee of trade, and finally, on April 9, 1651, the Council of State recommended that the company's monopoly of that part of West Africa extending from a point twenty miles north of Kormentine to within twenty miles of the Sierra Leone River be continued for fourteen years.<sup>23</sup>

This company also suffered numerous misfortunes on the African coast. A factory which the English had set up at Cape Corse in April, 1650, was seized the following year by some Swedes who for several years thereafter made it

<sup>21</sup> Scott, *Joint Stock Companies*, II, 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 12, 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 14-16.



the seat of their trade in Guinea.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding this fact the Swedes permitted the English to retain a lodge at Cape Corse with which the agents at Kormentine sometimes traded.<sup>25</sup> Even after the place was seized by Hendrik Carloff, a Danish adventurer, in 1658, the English seem to have been allowed to remain at Cape Corse. By this time, however, the English African Company had become unable to support its factories on the coast of Guinea. Therefore they were turned over to the English East India Company, and became occasional stopping places for its vessels on their way to and from the East Indies.

<sup>24</sup> S. P. (State Papers), Holland, 178, f. 123, undated paper concerning the title of the English to Cape Corse; A. C. R. (Records of the African Companies), 169: 69, deposition of Thomas Crispe, February 5, 1685/6; Dammaert, *Journal* (Journal gehouden bij Louijs Dammaert ungewaren met 't schip Prins Willem), September 19, 1652 (N. S.).

<sup>25</sup> *Remonstrantie aen de Ho. Mo. Heeren de Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden*, p. 18; Dammaert, *Journal*, September 19, 1652, May 18, 1653, December 7, 19, 1655, April 22 1656 (N. S.).

## CHAPTER II

### THE ROYAL ADVENTURERS IN ENGLAND

On account of the collapse of the king's cause at the death of Charles I, Prince Rupert, with his small fleet of royal vessels, was driven about from one part of the world to another. In 1652 he sought refuge in the Gambia River,<sup>1</sup> where he listened to stories told by natives of rich gold mines in that region. For a number of years the Negroes had brought gold from the inland of Africa to the Dutch on the Gold Coast. There seemed every reason to believe that the source of this gold supply was none other than that described by the natives of the Gambia River, and that it might be discovered somewhere in that region. Prince Rupert was so much impressed with the possibility of finding these mines that his voyage to Guinea was still vivid in his memory when Charles II assumed the throne in 1660. In the duke of York and other royal courtiers he found a group of willing listeners who determined to form a company for the purpose of sending an expedition to the Gambia to dig for gold. As early as October 3, 1660, the plans were formulated. Each member was required to invest at least £250 in the undertaking.<sup>2</sup> On December 18, 1660, the king, who was pleased with the adventurers for having "undertaken so hopeful an enterprise," granted them a charter<sup>3</sup> under the name of "The Company of the Royal Adventurers into Africa."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At one time Prince Rupert had been governor of the African company founded in 1631. Jenkinson, Hilary, "The Records of the English African Companies." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Third Series, VI, 195.

<sup>2</sup> Pepys, *Diary (The Diary of Samuel Pepys)*, edited by Henry B. Wheatley), I, 253.

<sup>3</sup> That some expense attached to the procuring of such charters appears from an item of £133.10s.3d. which the company incurred for this charter.

By this charter the Royal Adventurers received the land and the adjacent islands on the west coast of Africa from Cape Blanco to the Cape of Good Hope, for a period of one thousand years beginning with "the making of these our Letters Patents if the . . . grant (made to Crispe's company in 1631) be void and determined."<sup>4</sup> If, however, the former charter was still regarded as in force, the grant to the Royal Adventurers was to be effective upon the surrender or the expiration of the former company's privileges.<sup>5</sup> A committee of six men, the earl of Pembroke, Lord Craven, Sir George Carteret, William Coventry, Sir Ellis Leighton and Cornelius Vermuyden, was named to have charge of the company's affairs. No mention was made of the office of governor or of any court of directors. Apparently it was thought that the committee of six could direct all of the company's affairs. In Africa, this committee was empowered to appoint the necessary agents and officials and to raise and maintain whatever soldiers were necessary to execute martial law. The company had the right to admit new members if it desired. The king himself reserved the privilege of becoming an adventurer at any time and to invest an amount of money not exceeding one-sixteenth of the company's stock.

Furthermore, it was provided that the king "shall have, take and receive two third parts of all the gold mines which shall be seized, possessed and wrought in the parts and places aforesaid, we . . . paying and bearing two third parts of all the charges incident to the working and transporting of the said gold." The company was to have the other third and bear the remainder of the expense. That this provision was not a matter of mere form, as in so many of the royal

A. C. R., 1221, April 12, 1661. Wherever possible the volume and page of the company's books will be given, but since they have not all been paged the only other method of reference is by dates.

<sup>4</sup> Carr, Cecil T., "Select Charters of Trading Companies, 1530-1707," *Publications of the Selden Society*, XXVIII, 172-177.

<sup>5</sup> According to the charter of 1660 the former patent had been granted June 25, 1631. It would therefore expire June 25, 1662, if it was not surrendered before that time.



charters, is evident from the stimulus which had led to the formation of the company. Indeed in one part of the charter the purpose of the company is presented as "the setting forward and furthering of the trade intended (redwood, hides, elephants' teeth) in the parts aforesaid and the encouragement of the undertakers in discovering the golden mines and setting of plantations there." The trade in slaves was not mentioned in the charter.

Even before they had obtained this charter the organizers of the new company induced the king to lend them five of his Majesty's ships. These vessels, the "Henrietta," "Sophia," "Amity," "Griffin" and "Kingsale," were loaded with goods, tools and chemicals necessary for the working of the projected gold mines. Captain Robert Holmes, who had been with Prince Rupert in 1652, was given charge of the expedition; but the goods and necessities were consigned to William Usticke and two other factors of the company.<sup>6</sup> In December, 1660, the five vessels set out on their voyage to the Gambia River, where they arrived in the following March. There Holmes seized the island of St. André, then occupied by a feeble number of the subjects of the duke of Courland. Since the latter place was protected by a small fort the English began preparations to make it the seat of their operations in that region. Not long after they arrived, however, a fire destroyed the fortification and a large part of the goods which had been brought from England. Under these circumstances they chose to abandon that island, and to settle on two others which were better situated for defense and trade. These they named Charles Island and James Island in honor of

<sup>6</sup> A. C. R., 309, 1221. The records of the first few ventures are to be found in these two volumes of the company's books. Number 309 is the original book, the other being practically a copy of it. In some cases, however, the latter is more complete. These two books have been practically overlooked in the cataloging of the company's records, one of them being labelled, "Ship's Journal." They contain the only information we have of the financial condition of the first company as kept by Thomas Holder, treasurer of the company. The greater part of the two books is taken up with lists and costs of various goods which were sent to Africa.



their royal patrons. The latter was by far the more advantageously situated, and became the main stronghold of the English in the northern part of Africa during all the history of the African companies. Holmes probably remained on the Gambia until about the first of May, when he departed with one or two of the ships for England. In July as much of a cargo as possible was loaded on the "Amity," which finally arrived in England, after its crew had been depleted by disease.<sup>7</sup>

Information regarding the success of the mining project of this expedition is almost totally lacking, but it seems certain that nothing was done to discover the hoped-for gold mines. The climate affected the men so adversely that it is altogether unlikely that they even attempted to look for the mines. The small cargo carried back by the various ships, most of which seems to have been on the "Amity," probably represents the only tangible results of the expedition. These goods, consisting of elephants' teeth, wax and hides, sold for £1,567.8s.,<sup>8</sup> whereas the outlay for the expedition was probably between £4,000 and £4,500.<sup>9</sup>

This sum does not include £2,640.8s.8d. expense which was incurred to send another of the king's ships, the "Blackamoor," to the Gold Coast, in June, 1661.<sup>10</sup> The "Blackamoor" was followed in April, 1662, by the "Swallow," which, together with its cargo, cost the Royal Adventurers £1,101.2s.1d.<sup>11</sup> Later in the year the three ships, "Charles," "James" and "Mary," were sent to the Gold Coast at an expense of about £5,000.<sup>12</sup> By September, 1662,

<sup>7</sup> Admiralty Papers, Navy Board, In-Letters, 6, loose leaf order of the factors of the Royal Adventurers on the Gambia River, July 19, 1661. With this order there is a certificate dated January 3, 1661/2, to the effect that thirty-eight of the crew of the "Amity" had died on the way to Guinea and during the time they were on the Gambia River.

<sup>8</sup> A. C. R., 1221, October 20, 1662.

<sup>9</sup> It is impossible to determine the exact amount which was invested in goods, etc.

<sup>10</sup> A. C. R., 1221, June 20, 1661.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, 1662.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 309, September 26, 1662.

£17,400 had been subscribed by various persons to obtain the cargoes for the ships which had been dispatched to the coast of Guinea. Of this amount £800 had been promised by the king; £3,600 by the duke of York; £400 by the queen Mother; £400 by the duchess of Orleans; £800 by Prince Rupert; and £800 by the duke of Buckingham. Of the £17,400 subscribed all but about £1,000 had been paid by October 20, 1662. From this investment the company had received no returns except the £1,567.8s. from the first expedition, while the three last vessels, the "Charles," "James" and "Mary" had not yet arrived at the Gold Coast on their ill-fated voyage.<sup>13</sup>

Up to this time there had been no uniformity about the amounts invested, and no definite times at which the several amounts subscribed were due. It was assumed that money would be forthcoming from the members whenever it was needed to dispatch ships to the coast. About the middle of September, 1662, it was decided to pursue a more business-like policy. A list of subscribers for shares at four hundred pounds each was opened, and by the 15th of January, 1663, the amount of this second subscription was £17,000.<sup>14</sup> The stimulus for obtaining this added subscription was the fact that, at the same time, the company was agitating for a new charter, which was granted by the king, January 10, 1663.<sup>15</sup>

Experience had shown that the previous charter was inadequate, not only respecting the means of raising funds to

<sup>13</sup> A. C. R., 309, September 26, October 20, 1662. Only £560 of the king's subscription of £800 was paid, according to the list found under the first of the above dates. There may be a slight error, as warrants were issued for the payment of £580 at various times in 1661 and 1662. C. S. P., Treas. Bks. (Calendar of State Papers, Treasury Books), 1660-1667, pp. 312, 314, 383. This does not include a warrant for £300, which was probably used in the first expedition under Captain Holmes, but which for some reason is omitted in the company's books. C. S. P., Treas. Bks., 1660-1667, p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> A. C. R., 309, October 20, 1662, January 15, 1663. Afterward £3,200 was added to this, making £20,800 in all in the second subscription. A. C. R., 309, August 25, 1663.

<sup>15</sup> Carr, *Select Charters of Trading Companies*, pp. 178-181.



carry on the company's business, but also on account of the lack of any other officers to direct its affairs than the committee of six. By general consent of the patentees and of those who had later subscribed to the stock, it had been decided to surrender the charter of 1660 for one conferring more extensive privileges on the corporation. The charter obtained January 10, 1663, answered these requirements. The name was changed to "The Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa." The territory included in the charter reached to the Cape of Good Hope as in the previous patent, but the northern limit was extended from Cape Blanco to Cape Sallee on the coast of Morocco.

The new charter contained the same provisions in regard to the discovery of gold mines as the charter of 1660. By this time, however, the adventurers had discovered that the Negro trade could be made very lucrative. In this charter, therefore, they obtained "the whole, entire and only trade for the buying and selling bartering and exchanging of for or with any Negroes, slaves, goods, wares and merchandises whatsoever to be vented or found at or within any of the Cities" on the west coast of Africa. The charter provided that there should be no trading on the African coast except by the company in its corporate capacity, and that any one guilty of transgressing these rules should be liable to forfeiture of his ship and goods.<sup>16</sup>

The charter also required the shareholders to elect a governor, subgovernor, deputy governor and court of assistants; but that the routine business of the company should be conducted by a smaller committee corresponding to the committee of six of the previous company. The duke of York was elected governor, in which capacity he continued to serve during the company's entire existence. Thirty-six men were chosen annually to compose the court

<sup>16</sup> There were also provisions similar to those contained in the first charter for the government of the company's "plantations" (factories) in Africa. The clause allowing the king to subscribe one-sixteenth of the stock was omitted, but he could become a shareholder at any time.



of assistants. There was also an executive committee of seven which was responsible to the court of assistants.<sup>17</sup>

While the company was endeavoring to obtain this new charter an unsuspected difficulty arose. It will be remembered that in 1631 Sir Nicholas Crispe and others had received a patent to a portion of the west coast of Africa for thirty-one years. The first charter of Charles II to the Royal Adventurers in December, 1660, had been granted a year and a half previous to the expiration of Crispe's patent. In recognition of this fact the charter of the Royal Adventurers provided that if the former patent was not void, the new charter was not to be effective until its surrender or expiration. At first Crispe made no complaint about the transgression of his rights, probably because the first expedition under Captain Holmes had gone to the Gambia region, in which place Crispe had no interests. When it became apparent that the company intended to carry its activities further south, however, he appeared before the Privy Council on November 22, 1661, and asked to have his interest confirmed in the trade and settlements at Kormentine and in the region of the Sierra Leone and Sherbro rivers.<sup>18</sup> On December 20, 1661, his case was heard before the Privy Council, at which time the case was referred to the Lord High Treasurer.<sup>19</sup> The matter was neglected and finally dropped.

Crispe found it impossible to prevent the ships of the Royal Company from transgressing the regions mentioned in his charter. About the time at which his charter expired (June 25, 1662), he agreed to transfer all his interests in the fortifications at Kormentine and elsewhere to the Royal Adventurers. Although this agreement has not been found, there was apparently nothing in it which bound the company to remunerate Crispe and his associates, because

<sup>17</sup> The charter had provided that the executive committee should be composed of seven men if twenty-four assistants were elected and thirteen if thirty-six were chosen. A. C. R., 75: 29, 31, 41, 44, 49, 51, 68, 72, 93.

<sup>18</sup> P. C. R. (Register of the Privy Council), *Charles II*, 2: 451.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 502.

later, August, 1662, he petitioned the king for compensation for the forts and lodges which had been transferred to the Royal Adventurers. At first the king was favorable to Crispe's request in view of the service which he had rendered in building up the Guinea trade.<sup>20</sup> Later, neither the king nor the Royal Adventurers seem to have paid any attention to Crispe's plea for compensation.<sup>21</sup>

In later years the report was persistently spread that at the time when the agreement was made with Crispe the Privy Council had ordered the Royal Adventurers to pay him £20,000 in lieu of all his interests on the coast, and that the company had "seemed to acquiesce" in the order.<sup>22</sup> It does not seem possible that this assertion can be true in view of the foregoing facts, and of the absolute lack of mention of any such thing in the books of the company. Over a year later, August 15, 1664, Crispe presented a paper of an unknown character to which the court of assistants refused to give any notice.<sup>23</sup> It seems likely that this paper had nothing to do with the African forts, but that it was submitted in connection with a controversy over some African

<sup>20</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 109, C. C. to Secretary Nicholas, August 11, 1662. Folio 110 contains a note without date or signature saying that the matter was referred to the Lord High Treasurer and others.

<sup>21</sup> The earl of Clarendon declares in his *History of Charles II* that, upon the return of the ships from the first expedition, the company "compounded" with Sir Nicholas Crispe for his "propriety" in the fort at Kormentine. This is untrue, since it has just been shown that it was not until the middle of 1662 that he agreed to transfer his property to the Royal Adventurers and that it was afterward that Crispe endeavored to get the king's approval to grant him compensation. Clarendon may have remembered that the king was favorable to the proposition and therefore assumed that such a contract had been made. Hyde, Edward, First Earl of Clarendon. *The History of the Reign of King Charles the Second, from the Restoration to the end of the year 1667* (edited by J. Shebbeare), p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> This charge was put forward in a pamphlet, probably published in 1709, called *Sir John Crispe's Case in Relation to the Forts in Africa*. In this pamphlet the assertion is made that the Privy Council had a full hearing of the matter on July 29, 1662, and ordered the Royal Adventurers to pay Crispe £20,000 by an export duty of 2½ per cent. on goods sent to Africa. An examination of the Privy Council Register shows no order of that kind on that date or at any subsequent time.

<sup>23</sup> A. C. R., 75, August, 15, 1664.



goods, which were said to belong to the members of Crispe's company.<sup>24</sup> The entire lack of any other evidence of trouble between Crispe and the company leads one to think that no contract for such compensation was ever made.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, that he was not averse to the success of the Royal Adventurers is shown by the fact that he himself subscribed £2,000 in 1663 to the stock of the company.<sup>26</sup>

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the number of ships which were fitted out for the company's trade after it received its second charter in January, 1663. Suffice it to say that very active measures were undertaken, especially by the duke of York, who faithfully attended the weekly meetings of the court of assistants which were held in his apartments at Whitehall. The earl of Clarendon voiced the sentiments of these enthusiastic courtier-merchants when he said that, providing all went well, the Company of Royal Adventurers would "be found a Model equally to advance the Trade of England with that of any other company, even that of the East-Indies."<sup>27</sup>

If this prediction was to be realized it was necessary to have a greater stock than the first and second subscriptions had provided. Therefore a public declaration was issued inviting any of the king's subjects in England to subscribe for shares of not less than four hundred pounds each, one-half of each share to be paid by December 1, 1663, and the

<sup>24</sup> In January, 1663, the Royal Adventurers made an agreement with several members of Crispe's company providing for the transfer to England of their merchandise and personal effects which were still on the coast of Africa. Whether this second contract contained anything about compensation for the forts it is impossible to say, since this agreement also has not been preserved. Admiralty High Court, Examinations 134. Answers of Edward M. Mitchell and Ellis Leighton, May 10, 20, 1664.

<sup>25</sup> That Sir Nicholas Crispe felt the losses he had incurred in Guinea appears from his will of 1666, in which he directed the following inscription to be erected to his memory: "first discovered and settled the Trade of Gold in Affrica and built there the Castle of Cormentine," and thus "lost out of purse" more than £100,000. Crisp, Frederick A., *Family of Crispe*, I, 32.

<sup>26</sup> A. C. R., 309, June 25, September 4, 1663. Upon the latter date it appears that only £1300 of his subscription was paid.

<sup>27</sup> Clarendon, *History of the Reign of Charles II*, p. 198.



other one-half by March 1, following. The conditions of subscription provided that seven years after the first date, a committee from the adventurers should be chosen to make a fair valuation of the stock of the company. Each shareholder was then to be allowed to receive the value of his stock in money if he so desired. Thereafter this action was to be repeated every three years with the same privileges of withdrawal from the company.<sup>28</sup> Later, as a means of inducing those with smaller means to subscribe for stock, the company permitted subscriptions as small as fifty pounds, providing they were paid within eight days. Whenever any person subscribed more than four hundred pounds, he was allowed to pay the excess in eight quarterly payments beginning with the 24th of June, 1663.<sup>29</sup> By offering these inducements the third subscription amounted to £34,000 divided among about forty-five shareholders.<sup>30</sup>

On the 25th of August of the same year, however, it was necessary to seek for a fourth subscription which amounted to £29,000,<sup>31</sup> payment of which could be made in eight quarterly sums if desired. For all those who would pay the third and fourth subscriptions promptly, a discount of ten per cent. was offered. By these four subscriptions the stock of the company appeared on September 4, 1663, to be £102,000.<sup>32</sup> Of this amount it is probable that about £57,425 had been paid, which left unpaid subscriptions amounting to £44,775.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the money obtained by the sale of

<sup>28</sup> *The Several Declarations of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading into Africa*, January 12, 1662 (O. S.).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> A. C. R., 309, June 25, August 25, 1663.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 309, August 25, 1663.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 309, the balance of the company's books on September 4, 1663.

<sup>33</sup> These figures are arrived at by a careful examination of the various sums paid to Thomas Holder, the treasurer. As it is not always possible to be sure that the payments were made for stock, too much dependence cannot be put in the figures, especially when the sum arrived at by adding the items which appear to be owing the company for stock in the balance of September 4, 1663, amount to £52,000. This is of course several thousand pounds more than the sum arrived at by the former computation, but here again it is not possible to estimate exactly the money owing the company for stock and for other things.

shares the company had borrowed about £21,000. With the money obtained from these two sources approximately twenty-five ships were sent to the coast of Africa from December, 1662, to September, 1663.<sup>34</sup> From these voyages there were very unsatisfactory returns, and the company again found itself in a critical financial condition.

This unfortunate situation was largely the result of opposition, which its ships and factors had encountered from the Dutch West India Company on the coast of Guinea. For a long time this opposition bade fair to prevent the company from obtaining a share in the African trade. In view of this situation the king dispatched Sir Robert Holmes upon a second expedition to Africa in 1663 with orders to protect the company's rights. As a further means of encouragement Charles II ordered all gold imported from Africa by the Royal Company to be coined with an elephant on one side, as a mark of distinction from the coins then prevalent in England.<sup>35</sup> These coins were called "Guineas"; they served to increase the reputation and prestige of the company. Moreover, the king with many of his courtiers made important additions to their stock in the third and fourth subscriptions.<sup>36</sup>

From September 4, 1663, to the following March there

<sup>34</sup> This number is arrived at by a careful perusal of the first book kept by the company, number 309. Sometime in 1664 the company submitted a petition to the king in which it speaks of having sent over forty ships to the coast during the previous year and of supplying them with cargoes amounting to more than £160,000. C. O. (Colonial Office) 1: 17, f. 255, petition of the Royal Adventurers to (the king, 1664).

<sup>35</sup> C. S. P., Col. (Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies), 1661-1668, p. 175, warrant to officers of the king's mint, December 24, 1663. Another evidence of special favor was a grant made by the king in 1664 giving the Royal Company the sole privilege of holding lotteries in the king's dominions for three years. The company does not seem to have used it. C. S. P., Dom. (Calendar of State Papers, Domestic), 1666-1667, pp. 531, 532, Blanquefort and Hamilton to the king, February 25, 1667.

<sup>36</sup> In the third subscription the king's share was £5,200; in the fourth, £2,000. A. C. R., 309, June 25, August 25, 1663. The king's subscription with that of the queen for £400 seem never to have been paid, although a warrant was issued to the Lord High Treasurer, June 27, 1663, to pay the amount from the customs receipts.



are no records of the company, but a petition of the adventurers to the king in March, 1664,<sup>37</sup> shows that notwithstanding its financial difficulties the company had during the previous year sent to Africa forty ships and goods to the value of £160,000.<sup>38</sup> To follow the company's financial history from this time on is a difficult task because of inadequate sources. In the balance sheet of September 4, 1663, the company's stock was entered as £102,000 and its debts as about £21,000. When the news of Holmes' great success on the Gold Coast began to arrive in England, the company increased its preparations to open an extensive African trade. Therefore on May 10, 1664, an attempt was made to collect the unpaid stock subscriptions, and an invitation was extended to all members to lend one hundred pounds to the company for each share of four hundred pounds which they held. Notwithstanding the bright prospects which the company had at this time, its strenuous attempt to raise the loan produced only £15,650.<sup>39</sup>

In September, 1664, an attempt was made to increase the stock of the company by £30,000. Although the duke of York and many others added to their shares on this occasion,<sup>40</sup> only £18,200 was subscribed.<sup>41</sup> By this addition the stock of the Royal Adventurers amounted to £120,200, at about which sum it remained during the remainder of the company's history.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Upon this date, book number 309 was balanced and the items carried to another volume, which has been lost. In March, 1664, the resolutions of the general court and the court of assistants begin in number 75 of the company's books. While it is fortunate that these resolutions for the remaining history of this company have been preserved, they do not furnish adequate information regarding the company's financial condition at various times.

<sup>38</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 255, petition of the Royal Adventurers to (the king, March, 1664).

<sup>39</sup> A. C. R., 75: 7, 8, orders of the general court, May 10, 20, 1664.

<sup>40</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1664-1665, p. 7, Robert Lye to Williamson, September 13, 1664.

<sup>41</sup> A. C. R., 75: 21, 22.

<sup>42</sup> The total of the stock is shown by adding the five subscriptions: October, 1660, to September, 1662, first subscription. . . . . £ 17,400  
October, 1662, to January, 1663, second subscription. . . . . 20,800



Although the company had not obtained as much money as had been hoped for in the last subscription, it anticipated great success in its trade, until vague rumors began to circulate that Admiral DeRuyter had been sent to Africa to undo the conquest made by Captain Holmes. In the last part of December, 1664, these rumors were confirmed. In a petition to the king of January 2, 1665,<sup>43</sup> the company declared that its trade had already increased to such an extent that over one hundred ships were employed, and that a yearly return of from two to three hundred thousand pounds might reasonably be expected.<sup>44</sup>

On account of the injuries inflicted by DeRuyter on the African coast much of the anticipated loss of goods and vessels was realized. In all, the company lost the cargoes of eight ships; of the forts only Cape Corse remained. Under these ruinous circumstances it was not thought advisable to dispatch at once the goods which had been accumulated at Portsmouth.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly the company's vessels were

June, 1663, to August, 1663, third subscription.....	34,600
August, 1663, fourth subscription .....	29,200
September, 1664, fifth subscription .....	18,200
Total .....	<u>£120,200</u>

<sup>43</sup> S. P., Dom. (State Papers, Domestic), Charles II, 110, f. 18; C. O. 1: 19, ff. 7, 8.

<sup>44</sup> The financial status of the company at this time was as follows:

Assets:

	£	s	d
Ships and factories in Africa .....	125,962	6	2
Debts owing to the company in the colonies.....	49,895	0	0
Goods, ammunition, etc., at Portsmouth .....	48,000	0	0
Total .....	<u>223,857</u>	6	2

Stock of the company:

Amount subscribed .....	120,200	0	0
Amount paid (about) .....	103,000	0	0
Amount unpaid (about) .....	<u>17,200</u>	0	0

Debts, owing on bonds, etc. (about) .....100,000.0.0

Losses:

From DeRuyter at Cape Verde .....	50,000	0	0
Anticipated from DeRuyter at other places .....	<u>125,912</u>	6	2
Total. ....	<u>175,912</u>	6	2

<sup>45</sup> A. C. R., 75: 37, John Berkley and others to —, November 4, 1665.

unloaded and several of them were taken into the king's service.<sup>46</sup> The duke of York used what little money was on hand to apply on the company's debt in order that the company's expenses for interest might be reduced.<sup>47</sup> Because of the Anglo-Dutch war and the fact that the company had no money, it could do nothing but send an occasional ship to Africa loaded with some of the goods left at Portsmouth. From this time on the company's trading activity was confined to such scattered voyages.<sup>48</sup>

On January 11, 1666,<sup>49</sup> the court of assistants discussed the proposition of granting trading licenses to private individuals. While no action seems to have been taken at that time, it ultimately became the practise of the company to grant such a freedom of trade. On April 9, 1667, a resolution was adopted empowering the committee of seven to issue trading licenses in return for a payment of three pounds per ton.<sup>50</sup> These licenses were obtained by those who desired to carry on trade in their own ships, and also by officers of the company's ships who wished to engage in private adventures. During the course of the war one hears of many such grants to various individuals, among whom was Prince Rupert.<sup>51</sup>

The practise of issuing licenses was interrupted for a short time at the conclusion of the Anglo-Dutch war by a feeble attempt to revive the company's activities. An effort was made to collect arrears on the subscriptions,<sup>52</sup> and on

<sup>46</sup> S. P., Dom., *Charles II*, 186: 1.

<sup>47</sup> A. C. R., 75: 37, Berkley and others to —, November 4, 1665.

<sup>48</sup> On April 6, 1666, the king, in response to a petition from the Royal Adventurers, granted to the company a ship called the "Golden Lyon" which had been captured from the Dutch by Sir Robert Holmes in 1664. C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 370, the king to duke of York, March 28, 1666.

<sup>49</sup> A. C. R., 75: 40.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 52.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 57. A part of the debts had been incurred on the common seal of the company and part on the personal security of the committee of seven.

<sup>52</sup> A. C. R., 75: 56, 58. An attempt was made to induce the king to pay his subscription. On the other hand, the company owed the king a considerable sum for the ships which it had used from time to time. S. P., Dom., *Charles II*, 199: 14.

August 21, 1667, the general court ordered that an additional subscription should be opened, and that no more trading licenses should be granted.<sup>53</sup> The only result of this effort was that the duke of York and several others accepted stock of the company in lieu of the bonds which they held.<sup>54</sup> In view of this fact it was decided, January 20, 1668, to resume the policy of granting licenses.<sup>55</sup>

In comparison with the trade conducted by the private adventurers that of the company became quite insignificant. Since the company had much difficulty in supporting its agents on the African coast it ordered, August 28, 1668, that in the future those who received licenses should agree to carry one-tenth of their cargo for the company's account.<sup>56</sup> It was difficult for the company to raise the small sum of money necessary to buy this quota of goods. No one was willing to invest money in the stock of a bankrupt company, and certainly few were desirous of making loans to it when there seemed practically no chance of repayment. In the latter part of 1668 and in the year 1669, several attempts were made to collect the early subscriptions which remained unpaid.<sup>57</sup> This effort was attended with very little success, because the company had ceased to be of importance.<sup>58</sup>

One of the reasons why the company's business was practically neglected during these last years was because many of its members began to trade to Africa as private individuals. A number of men even went so far as to project an organization entirely separate from the company. Finally, in 1667, several members offered to raise a stock of £15,000 to carry on trade to the region of the Gambia

<sup>53</sup> A. C. R., 75: 58.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 59.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 70.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 77.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 85, 88.

<sup>58</sup> The duke of Buckingham, however, paid his arrears, which led the duke of York to remark, "I will give the Devil his due, as they say the Duke of Buckingham hath paid in his money to the Company." Pepys, *Diary*, VIII, 142.



River.<sup>59</sup> This proposal was debated by the general court and finally referred to a committee with the stipulation that if adopted the company should be concerned in the stock of the new organization to the extent of £3,000.<sup>60</sup> This arrangement could not be consummated in 1667,<sup>61</sup> but on November 27, 1668, a similar proposition was adopted.<sup>62</sup>

An organization to be known as the Gambia Adventurers was to have the sole trade to northern Africa for a period of seven years, beginning with January 1, 1669. For this privilege they were to pay the Company of Royal Adventurers £1,000 annually, and to be responsible for the expense of the forts and settlements in that region. These places were to be kept in good repair by the Gambia Adventurers, who were to receive compensation from the Royal Company for any settlements.<sup>63</sup> A suggestion for carrying on the trade to the Gold Coast in a similar way received no attention from the general court. The Gambia Adventurers occupied the same house in London with the company, and there seems little doubt but that its members consisted largely of those stockholders of the Royal Adventurers who belonged primarily to the merchant class.<sup>64</sup> It is extremely difficult to estimate the success of the Gambia Adventurers, since their records, if any were kept, have not been preserved. In all probability their trade was largely confined to the important products of the Gambia region, namely elephants' teeth, hides and wax, although several of their ships are known to have gone to the West Indies with slaves.

Since many of the company's stockholders were interested in the Gambia venture the company's business on the Gold Coast was greatly neglected. During the year 1669

<sup>59</sup> A. C. R., 75: 61.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 62, 63.

<sup>61</sup> It seems certain, however, that these men who were interested in the Gambia trade made some other arrangements at that time by means of which a certain amount of goods was sent to that place. A. C. R., 75: 82, 83.

<sup>62</sup> A. C. R., 75: 83.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 82.

<sup>64</sup> As opposed to those who were from the king's court.

the company's trade became so insignificant that, at the suggestion of the king, Secretary Arlington asked the company if it intended to continue the African trade.<sup>65</sup> In answer the company recounted the losses incurred in the Anglo-Dutch war which, it declared, had made it necessary to grant licenses to private traders in order to maintain the forts and factories in Africa. It asked the king to assist the company by paying his subscription, by helping to recover its debts in Barbadoes, and by granting royal vessels for the protection of the African coast. With such encouragement the company declared that it would endeavor to raise a new stock to carry on the African trade.<sup>66</sup> Receiving no answer to their appeal the members of the company considered various expedients, one of which was to lease the right of trade on the Gold Coast;<sup>67</sup> another was to endeavor to obtain new subscriptions to the company's stock, which seemed impossible because of the fear that the money would be used toward paying the company's debts, and not for the purpose of trade.<sup>68</sup> In fact, it had been only too evident for several years that no additions could be made to the present worthless stock of the company. If the company desired to continue its activities, it would be necessary to have an entirely new stock unencumbered with the claims of old creditors. The main problem confronting the company therefore was to make an agreement with its clamorous creditors.

On May 18, 1671, a general court of the adventurers approved of a proposition to form a new joint stock under the old charter.<sup>69</sup> The stock of the shareholders, which at this

<sup>65</sup> A. C. R., 75: 90, 91.

<sup>66</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1668-1669, p. 459, August 25, 1669.

<sup>67</sup> A. C. R., 75: 94.

<sup>68</sup> C. O. 268: 1, charter of the Royal African Company, September 27, 1672.

<sup>69</sup> In the previous April a bill had been introduced into the House of Lords to incorporate the company by act of Parliament. On account of the various plans under consideration there was no procedure with the bill. L. J. (Journal of the House of Lords), XII: 480; H. M. C. (Historical Manuscripts Commission), report 9, pt. 2, p. 9b; H. L. MSS. (House of Lords, Manuscripts), draft act to incorporate the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa, April 6, 1671.



time amounted to £120,200, was to be valued at ten per cent. and so reduced to £12,020; this was to form the first item in the new stock. In regard to the company's debts, which amounted to about £57,000, rather severe measures were attempted. Two-thirds of the debts, or £38,000, was, as in the case of the stock, reduced to one-tenth, or £3,800, which was to form the second item in the new stock. The other one-third of the debts, or £19,000, was to be paid to the creditors in full out of the money subscribed by the new shareholders.<sup>70</sup> Adding the cash payment of £19,000 and estimating at par the £3,800 which they were to have in the new stock, the creditors were to receive a little less than thirty-five per cent. of their debts. If they did not accept this arrangement it was proposed to turn over the company's effects to them, and to secure an entirely new charter from the king. As anticipated the plan was unsatisfactory to many of the creditors, because the company proposed to pay the £19,000 in six monthly installments after the subscription for the new joint stock was begun.<sup>71</sup> On October 28, 1671, the preamble and articles under which the new subscription was to be made were approved by the general court, and notice was given to the refractory creditors that they must accept the arrangement within ten days or the king would revoke the company's patent.<sup>72</sup> Although the trouble with the creditors had not been adjusted, subscriptions on the new stock began November 10, 1671. A few weeks later there was held a general court of the new subscribers, at which Sir Richard Ford, one of the most important members of the company and also of the new subscribers, declared that "they should not differ for small matters."<sup>73</sup> Thereupon it was resolved to grant the creditors forty per cent. on their debts and the shareholders, as

<sup>70</sup> A. C. R., 75: 101, 102. See also the proposals for a resettlement of the company's affairs in S. P., Dom., *Charles II*, 67, ff. 341, 342.

<sup>71</sup> A. C. R., 75: 106, 107.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 108.

<sup>73</sup> *British Husbandry and Trade*, II, 14.



in the previous plan, ten per cent. on their stock.<sup>74</sup> This made a total payment of £34,000 divided as follows: £22,800, forty per cent. of the company's debts, which amounted to £57,000; and £11,200, ten per cent. of the paid subscriptions, which amounted to about £112,000.<sup>75</sup> In lieu of this payment the stockholders were to cede to the new subscribers the forts and other property in Africa and all the payments due from the Gambia Adventurers during the four remaining years of their contract.

As has been said the articles of subscription were adopted October 28, 1671. They provided for a stock of £100,000 under the old charter, which should be paid to the treasurer of the company in ten monthly payments ending September 25, 1672. As a matter of fact the subscription reached the sum of £110,100. It was also provided that every new subscriber should have one vote in the general court for each one hundred pound share, but that no one should be an officer of the company, unless he had subscribed for four hundred pounds in shares. The subgovernor and the deputy governor were to be aided by a court of assistants, reduced to twenty-four in number, and by a select committee of five instead of the committee of seven as formerly. On January 10, 1672, there was held a general court of the new subscribers, at which the duke of York was elected governor; Lord Ashley, subgovernor; and John Buckworth, deputy governor.<sup>76</sup> The duke of York and Lord Ashley were well known for their interest in colonial affairs. According to the terms of the subscription the deputy governor was to be a merchant and a member of the committee of five, which provision indicated plainly that the company expected Buckworth to manage its business affairs.

Although the new subscription had been made to replace the stock of the old adventurers, there is little evidence that

<sup>74</sup> A. C. R., 76: 52, the preamble under which the subscriptions were made as amended December 19, 1671, article 4; *ibid.*, 75: 111.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 76, October 22, 1674. A report of a committee says that there was about £22,000 of the old subscriptions which had not been paid.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 100: 50.

anyone regarded it necessary to obtain a new charter. Since the creditors still refused to be satisfied with the concession of forty per cent. on their debts, however, the new subscribers hesitated to pay their money which might be used to pay off the old debts.<sup>77</sup> It therefore became necessary to carry out the previous threat against the creditors to induce the king to grant a new charter to the present subscribers, which was done September 27, 1672.<sup>78</sup> This action finally convinced the creditors that they could obtain no better terms than had been offered, and therefore they agreed to accept them and also to surrender all their rights to the patentees of the new charter which was being issued. That the attitude of the creditors was not the only moving force toward a new charter is probable, because the old charter was not adequate to meet the needs of the Royal African Company which was to follow.

<sup>77</sup> C. O. 268: 1, charter of the Royal African Company, September 27, 1672.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER III

### ON THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA

In 1660 all the colonial powers of Europe held the west coast of Africa in great esteem, not only because it produced gold, but also because it was regarded as a necessary adjunct to the colonies in the West Indies for the supply of Negro slaves. During their long war with Spain and Portugal the Dutch acquired a large portion of the West African coast, including the main fortress of St. George d'Elmina. This fact led them to regard themselves as having succeeded to the exclusive claims of the Portuguese on the Guinea coast.<sup>1</sup> With this end in view the Dutch agreed in the treaty of August 6, 1661, to return Brazil to the Portuguese as compensation for the forts and settlements which they had seized on the coast of Guinea.<sup>2</sup> Although the Dutch played the most prominent part in depriving the Portuguese of the trade to Guinea, the English, French, Swedes, Danes, and Courlanders, all obtained a minor commerce to Africa which they very jealously guarded. In a country so remote from the laws and civilization of Europe personal quarrels often arose among the subjects of these different nations, who were inclined to obtain what they could by fair means or foul. They magnified these petty quarrels<sup>3</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> John II of Portugal had assumed the title of Lord of Guinea in 1485.

<sup>2</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> As for instance, in 1659, the seizure of a Dutch ship called the *Vrede* by a French captain under the pretense of a Swedish commission. Lias, *West Indien*, 1658 tot 1665, Zealand chamber to the Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. (West India Company), March 1, 1660 (N. S.). Also, in the same year, the Dutch confiscated a Courland ship called the *Pietas* for trespassing on Dutch territory. *Ibid.*, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G. (States General), June 23, 1661 (N. S.). Louis XIV also complained about the disturbance of French commerce on the Gambia by the Dutch. *Lettres, Mémoires et Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Estrades*, I, 185, Louis XIV to d'Estrades, August 13, 1661 (N. S.).



such an extent that they continually led to international complications.

The European trade in Africa was confined mainly to the regions of the Gold Coast and the Gambia River. Near the mouth of the Gambia River the subjects of the duke of Courland had bought an island from the natives in 1651. On this island they built a small fort, called St. André, from which they traded to several factories up the river.<sup>4</sup> Besides the Courlanders, the French and the Dutch carried on a very precarious trade on the river. In the early part of 1659, as a result of the war in the northern part of Europe, the duke of Courland became a prisoner of the king of Sweden. Under these circumstances the Amsterdam chamber of the Dutch West India Company<sup>5</sup> induced the Duke's commissioner, Henry Momber, to enter into a contract turning over to it all the duke's possessions in the Gambia River. The Dutch were to maintain the factories and to enjoy the trade until the duke was able to resume possession. The contract was of very doubtful value, since Momber himself admitted that he had no power to make it, but notwithstanding this fact he undertook to carry out its terms.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after the Dutch took possession of the island belonging to the duke of Courland it was surprised and plundered by a French pirate who, in return for a consideration, handed it over to a Groningen merchant of the Dutch West India Company. The Groningen chamber of this company was not anxious to retain the island and therefore signified to Momber its willingness to return it to Courland. Momber, who feared to have caused the displeasure

<sup>4</sup> Diederichs, pp. 20, 21. (Diederichs, H., *Herzog Jacobs von Kurland Kolonien an der Westküste von Afrika.*)

<sup>5</sup> The West India Company was subdivided into the chambers of Amsterdam, Groningen, Zeeland, North Holland and Friesland, and the Maas. The Amsterdam chamber was much the most important; it was known therefore as the "presidiale" chamber.

<sup>6</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 191, February 4, 1659 (N. S.). At the same time Momber advised Steele, the Courland commander at Fort St. André, to pay no attention to the contract if he was in a position to defend himself, but Steele was unable to resist. Diederichs, pp. 45, 46.

of the duke by his contract, was glad to regain the island in June, 1660. Notwithstanding this fact, several ships belonging to the Amsterdam chamber of the West India Company entered the Gambia River and took possession of the island, keeping the Courlanders prisoners for a month. The natives, however, interfered in behalf of the Courlanders, and the Dutch were finally compelled to retire to Cape Verde, leaving Otto Steele, the duke's commander, in possession.<sup>7</sup>

It was during this state of affairs on the African coast that the Company of Royal Adventurers was organized in England. It received its charter December 18, 1660. In the same month, Captain Robert Holmes sailed from England in command of the five royal ships which composed the first expedition. In March, 1661, he arrived at Cape Verde, where he at once informed the Dutch commander that he had orders from Charles II to warn all persons of whatsoever nation that the right of trade and navigation from Cape Verde to the Cape of Good Hope belonged exclusively to the king of England. Holmes ordered the Dutch to vacate their forts and to abandon the coast within six or seven months.<sup>8</sup> Thereupon he seized the island of Boa Vista, one of the Cape Verde group claimed by the Dutch since 1621. Later he sent a frigate into the mouth of the Gambia. Otto Steele, the Courland commander of Fort St. André, unable to discern whether friend or foe was approaching, fired upon the frigate. Holmes considered this an insult,<sup>9</sup> and two days later sent a note to Steele requiring him to surrender the island to the English within ten days. At first Steele refused to obey, maintaining that the fort was the rightful possession of the duke of Courland. Thereupon Holmes threatened to level

<sup>7</sup> Diederichs, pp. 46-8; C. O. 1: 16, ff. 193, 195-7.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution of S. G., July 28, 1661 (N. S.); Aitzema, X, 76. (Aitzema, Lieveuw van, *Historie of Verhael van Saken van Staet en Oorlogh.*)

<sup>9</sup> See the oath taken by Holmes' men dated March 7, 1660/1, enclosed in the letter of Nassau and others to the estates of H. and W. F. (Holland and West Friesland), January 17/27, 1662.

the fort to the ground. Steele realized that with so few men and supplies resistance was useless, and therefore he complied with Holmes' demands.<sup>10</sup> The English assumed possession of the island, but after a fire had destroyed nearly all the fort and its magazine,<sup>11</sup> they chose to abandon it, and to settle on two other islands, which they named Charles Island and James Island respectively in honor of their royal patrons. In this way the English gained their first possessions in the Gambia River.

When Captain Holmes left England the Dutch ambassadors in London informed the States General that he had gone to the "reviere Guijana" where he would build a fort, establish a trade and search for gold mines. This announcement was immediately sent to the West India Company which had received the more authentic advice that the English ships were on the way to the Gambia River. The West India Company urged that the Dutch ambassadors in London be instructed to inquire more fully as to the purposes of the expedition, and to prevent if possible anything being done to the prejudice of the company.<sup>12</sup> The ambassadors learned that the English maintained that all nations had a right to trade on the Gambia River, and that other nations than the Dutch had forts there.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the West India Company maintained that ever since its formation it had traded on the Gambia River and that, since the contract with the duke of Courland, it had been in complete possession of the river.<sup>14</sup> After receiving this statement the States General requested their ambassadors in London to see that the company's forts and lodges in the Gambia

<sup>10</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 193, relation of Otto Steele; Diederichs, p. 49. Holmes afterward admitted that there were but two men and a boy in the fort when it was taken. C. O. 1: 30, f. 74, Holmes to Sir Edward Walker, May 20, 1673.

<sup>11</sup> VanGogh and others to S. G., September 6/16, 1661.

<sup>12</sup> Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G., January 10, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>13</sup> Resolution of S. G., January 13, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>14</sup> Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G., January 31, 1661 (N. S.).



River were not disturbed.<sup>15</sup> When the news of Holmes' exploit and his reported warning to the Dutch commander to evacuate the entire African coast reached the United Netherlands, the West India Company at once lodged a complaint with the States General.<sup>16</sup> At their suggestion the Dutch ambassadors obtained an audience with Charles II, who assured them that neither he nor his officers had given any order for the injury which had been done to the subjects of the United Netherlands, much less to possess any of their forts. The king also assured them that, if Holmes had committed any unjust action, he and his officers should be exemplarily punished.<sup>17</sup> Sir George Downing, the English envoy extraordinary at The Hague, further declared that Holmes had very strict instructions not to disturb the subjects of the United Netherlands or those of any other nation, and that, if anything to the contrary had been done, it was without the least authority.<sup>18</sup> Finally on August 14, 1661, Charles II declared to the States General that their friendship was very dear to him and that he would under no circumstances violate the "Droit de Gens."<sup>19</sup> With all this extravagant profession of good will no definite assurance was given the Dutch that the islands of St. André and Boa Vista would be restored to them. On August 16, Downing wrote to the earl of Clarendon that the island of St. André did not belong to the Dutch at all, but to the duke of Courland, and that an answer to this effect could be returned to the Dutch ambassadors if they objected to Holmes' actions. Furthermore, Downing intimated that the duke could probably be induced to resign his claims to the English.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Resolution of S. G., February 5, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>17</sup> Clar. St. Paps. (Clarendon State Papers), 104, f. 211, the Dutch ambassadors to Ruysch, August 5, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 104, f. 217, Downing to S. G., August 8, 1661.

<sup>19</sup> Aitzema, X, 78, Charles II to S. G., August 14, 1661.

<sup>20</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 104: 237, Downing to Clarendon, August 19, 1661 (N. S.). In another letter Downing declared, "it would be very well to accept of the Duke his transferring his interest to his Ma<sup>ty</sup>, and for the Dutch

Meanwhile, Captain Holmes, who was responsible for this unpleasant international complication, had returned from Guinea. Since he suffered no punishment for his violent actions on the African coast except the loss of his salary,<sup>21</sup> the Dutch ambassadors in London reminded the king that on August 14, 1661, he had absolutely disclaimed the proceedings of Holmes.<sup>22</sup> They requested, therefore, that Holmes be called to account for his actions, that Fort St. André be restored, that reparation for damages be made, and that in the future the king's subjects observe the laws of nations more regularly.<sup>23</sup> Holmes was ordered before the Privy Council to answer to the charges of the ambassadors,<sup>24</sup> but no effort was made to force him to respond. The duke of York kept him busy with the fleet, where he incurred some official displeasure by failing to require a Swedish ship to strike colors to his Majesty's ships in English seas, and was therefore required to be detained until further order.<sup>25</sup> Having extricated himself from this trouble Holmes finally appeared before the Privy Council in January, 1662,<sup>26</sup> where he offered "many reasons" in justification of his actions in Guinea.<sup>27</sup> He easily satisfied the king and the members of the Privy Council; this is not surprising since many of these men had helped to organize and finance the expedition.

amb<sup>r</sup> you will do well to be 6 or 8 moneths in examining the matter and then let them know his Ma<sup>t</sup>'<sup>ies</sup> mind." Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 12, Downing to Nicholas, January 27, 1661/2.

<sup>21</sup> He suffered this punishment only because he had taken to Guinea a number of extra men whose wages the king felt obliged to pay. Admiralty Papers, Navy Board, In-Letters, 5, James to the Navy Board, September 10, 1661.

<sup>22</sup> This seems to be a little too much to say of the king's letter.

<sup>23</sup> C. O. 1: 15, f. 168, VanGogh and others to S. G., October 19/29, 1661.

<sup>24</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 2: 417, October 25, 1661.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459, November 27, 1661.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 510, 514, January 8, 10, 1662. He may also have been before the Council in December, as an order was made on December 21, 1661, rescinding the former order to stop his pay. Admiralty Papers, Navy Board, In-Letters, 6, James to the Navy Board, December 21, 1661.

<sup>27</sup> Nassau and Hoorn to the estates of H. and W. F., January 17/27, 1662.



By this time it had become apparent that Charles II did not intend to make immediate restitution of St. André to the Dutch. This was in accordance with Downing's advice "to be 6 or 8 months in examining the matter" before making a decision.<sup>28</sup> The longer the English retained possession of the island the less likely the Dutch were to regain it. Finally, the duke of Courland sent a representative, Adolph Wolfratt, to London to insist upon the restitution of his possessions. Originally the English had apparently supported the claims of the duke of Courland, but it developed that they were no more inclined to return St. André to the duke of Courland than to the Dutch. The matter dragged on until November 17, 1664, when a contract was made between Charles II and the duke whereby the latter surrendered all his rights on the Gambia River. In return he received certain trading privileges there and the island of Tobago in the West Indies.<sup>29</sup>

When one proceeds from the Cape Verde region to the Gold Coast one finds that Dutch influence was especially strong. From Elmina and other forts the Dutch commanded the largest portion of the trade along this coast. However, the Danes, Swedes and English had long maintained a commerce on the Gold Coast where they also had established a number of factories. In 1658, Hendrik Carloff, an adventurer carrying a Danish commission, attacked and made himself master of Cape Corse which had been in the possession of the Swedes since 1651. After entering into friendly relations with the Dutch at Elmina,<sup>30</sup> Carloff returned to Europe, leaving his lieutenant, Samuel Smits, in charge of the fort. Fearing that the Swedes and the English, who had entered into an alliance, might endeavor to regain Cape Corse, Carloff advised Smits to surrender the fort to Jasper van Heusden, director general of the West India Company on the Gold Coast. The instructions were

<sup>28</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 12, Downing to Nicholas, January 27, 1661/2.

<sup>29</sup> C. O. 1: 18, ff. 310, 311.

<sup>30</sup> Papieren van Johan de Witt betreffende de Oost en West Indische compagnie, Carloff to Valckenburg, February 15, 16, 1658 (N. S.).



unnecessary, as Smits had surrendered Cape Corse to the Dutch on April 15, 1659. In return for this fort Smits and one of his compatriots received 5,000 and 4,000 gulden respectively.<sup>31</sup>

At the time when Hendrik Carloff seized Cape Corse the English had there<sup>32</sup> a factory to which they traded from their main fort at Kormentine.<sup>33</sup> On May 1, 1659, very soon after the Dutch obtained possession of the place, the English factory with all its goods was burned by the natives, perhaps at the instigation of the Dutch. The Hollanders, however, were not without misfortunes of their own, for after disavowing Smits' contract the Danes sent a new expedition to Guinea which seized a hill commanding Cape Corse, on which they built the fort of Fredericksburg. Furthermore the Swedes, who had been dispossessed of Cape Corse by the Danes with the assistance of natives, toward the end of 1660, drove the Dutch out of Cape Corse. Since the Swedes were insignificant in number the fort very shortly fell into the control of the vacillating Negro inhabitants.

As soon as the natives obtained possession of Cape Corse they permitted the English to rebuild their factory at that place. An agreement was also made by which, upon the payment of a certain sum of money, the fort was to be surrendered to the English.<sup>34</sup> Since the Dutch maintained that Cape Corse belonged exclusively to them by reason of their contract with the Danes, they determined to prevent the English from obtaining possession of it. Furthermore, in order to exclude other Europeans from trading to any part of the Gold Coast, the Dutch declared a blockade on the whole coast, in which Komenda and other villages as well

<sup>31</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Sweden, no. 38.

<sup>32</sup> *Remonstrantie aen de Ho. Mo. Heeren de Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Dammaert, *Journal*, September 19, 1652, May 18, 1653, December 7, 19, 1655, April 22, 1656 (N. S.).

<sup>34</sup> S. P., Holland, 178, f. 123, undated paper dealing with the English title to Cape Corse.

as Cape Corse were situated. To carry out this policy they kept several ships plying up and down the coast.

The Dutch then proceeded to capture the following English ships for endeavoring to trade on the Gold Coast: the "Blackboy," April, 1661; the "Daniel," May, 1661; the "Merchant's Delight,"<sup>35</sup> August, 1661; the "Charles," August, 1661; the "Paragon," October, 1661; the "Ethiopian," January, 1662. In addition to these injuries the Dutch forbade the English at Kormentine to trade with the factory at Cape Corse, which warning was no sooner given than the factory was mysteriously destroyed by fire a second time, May 22, 1661. The English bitterly complained that this misfortune was due to the instigation of the Dutch.<sup>36</sup>

In like manner the Dutch captured a Swedish ship and interfered with the trade of the Danes to their fort of Fredericksburg,<sup>37</sup> which action greatly incensed the Danish African Company. Since voluntary satisfaction for these injuries could not be expected, Simon de Petkum, the Danish resident in London, caused the arrest of a Dutch West India ship, the "Graf Enno," which was one of the main offenders in seizing Danish as well as English ships on the Guinea coast.<sup>38</sup> The case was brought before the Admiralty Court, and judgment of condemnation was rendered in favor of the Danes.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Afterwards retaken by the English in the West Indies, toward the last of 1663. Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal, Downing to S. G., February 3, 1663/4. O. S.

<sup>36</sup> Admiralty High Court, Libels, 114, no. 231.

<sup>37</sup> Aitzema, X, 277.

<sup>38</sup> Admiralty High Court, Libels, 115, no. 124; *ibid.*, Examinations, 74, deposition of Edward Paulstage, March 7, 1662/3.

<sup>39</sup> Nassau and Hoorn to the estates of H. and W. F., January 24/February 3, 1662. In March, 1663, Bernard Sparke, owner of the Paragon, which the Dutch had seized on the Gold Coast, arrested a West India Company ship at Ilfracombe. Sparke asked for the condemnation of the ship, but on account of a treaty entered into between the English and the Dutch in September, 1662, the Privy Council refused to detain the Dutch ship. Cunaeus to the estates of H. and W. F., March 27/April 6, 1663; P. C. R., Charles II, 3: 357, 380.



At The Hague, Sir George Downing now had a great opportunity to vent his remarkable store of epithets on the Dutch for their violent actions against English vessels in Guinea. He complained to the States General "that the people of this contry doe everywhere as oppertunity offers sett upon, rob and spoyle" the English subjects; and that these things were being done not only by the West India Company but even by ships of war belonging to the Dutch government. Downing threatened that the king would "give order for the seizing of a proportionable number and value of ships and merchandises belonginge to this contrey and distribute them amongst them accordinge . . . to their respective losses, and will take care that noe ships bee seized but such as belong to those provinces, and to such townes in those provinces, to which the ships belonged that did commit these violences and robberies."<sup>40</sup> In this way Downing hoped to set the non-maritime towns and provinces of the Netherlands against those which were interested in commerce, and thus to secure a cessation of the seizures. Upon one occasion in the time of Cromwell he had used this method successfully. Downing declared too that, to obtain justice in the United Provinces, it was necessary for the Dutch to realize that his Majesty would have satisfaction for injuries done "if not by faire means, by force."<sup>41</sup>

The Dutch ignored Downing's demands, even though on June 6, 1662, he reminded them of their unjust actions on the Gold Coast.<sup>42</sup> In all probability they were trusting to obviate all difficulties in the commercial treaty then being negotiated at London. In August, a new complaint was made to the States General<sup>43</sup> concerning the seizure of the English ship, "Content," off the Cape Verde Islands.<sup>44</sup> Shortly thereafter, the States General declared with respect

<sup>40</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, ff. 68, 69, Downing to S. G., May 3/13, 1662.

<sup>41</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 76, ff. 217, 218, Downing to Clarendon, May 9, 1662.

O. S.

<sup>42</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 73, Downing to S. G., June 6/16, 1662.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 106, Downing to S. G., August 6/16, 1662.

<sup>44</sup> Add. MSS. (Additional Manuscripts), 22,919, f. 270.



to the English ship, "Daniel," seized in 1661, that it was a gross misrepresentation for the owner to maintain that the master and crew of the ship were English. Furthermore, the Dutch advanced proof that the ship had been fitted out with a cargo in Amsterdam, and had afterwards attempted to pass as an English ship, in order to escape being seized as an interloper by the West India Company.<sup>45</sup>

Further consideration regarding these seizures was postponed indefinitely by the 15th article of the commercial treaty entered into between the United Provinces and England in September, 1662.<sup>46</sup> In accordance with its provisions the ships which the Dutch had seized on the African coast were included in the lists of damages which the English submitted against the United Provinces. Thereafter the ships formed no important part in the negotiations between the two nations.

Thus far the Company of Royal Adventurers which had sent out the expedition under Captain Robert Holmes had not been more active on the Gold Coast than numerous private traders of England. The seizure of ships by the Dutch had been a matter of much apprehension to all the traders on the coast, but from now on it mainly concerned the Royal Adventurers. The company was anxious to establish new forts and factories in Africa in order to build up a lucrative trade. Its agents therefore began to erect a lodge at Tacorary, a village not far from Cape Corse. The Dutch, although they had not succeeded in recovering Cape Corse from the natives, considered that the fort and the surrounding territory belonged to them. On May 24, 1662, they bade the English to desist from further invasion of their rights at Tacorary or any other place under Dutch obedience.<sup>47</sup> The English, however, disregarded the Dutch protest and notwithstanding their opposition the factory was completed.<sup>48</sup> In less than a month from this time the

<sup>45</sup> Resolution of S. G., August 28, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>46</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, pp. 424, 425.

<sup>47</sup> Index op het Register en Accorden met de Naturellen, Wilree to Edmund Young, May 24, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>48</sup> S. P., Holland, 176, f. 119.

natives drove the Dutch out of their factory in Comany.<sup>49</sup> Thereupon the Dutch determined to continue even more vigorously their policy of blockading the whole coast and, by cutting off the trade of the natives with the English, to force the Negroes into subjection and to recover Comany and the fort at Cape Corse.

In October, 1662, two ships of the Royal Adventurers, the "Charles" and the "James," were prevented from trading to Komenda by the "Golden Lyon" and two other Dutch men-of-war.<sup>50</sup> When asked as to the reason for this interruption of trade the Dutch general, Dirck Wilree, replied that he had caused the ports of Comany and Cape Corse to be blockaded until the natives rendered satisfaction for the injuries which they had committed against the Dutch.<sup>51</sup> When the two English ships continued their effort to trade at Cape Corse and other villages, the "Golden Lyon" followed them from place to place, and on one occasion seized a small skiff which was attempting to land some goods. Discouraged at the treatment accorded to them the English officers finally gave up the attempt to trade on the Gold Coast, and returned home with their ships, after delivering to the Dutch a solemn protest against the injuries which they had suffered.<sup>52</sup>

When Secretary Williamson informed Sir George Downing of the misfortunes of the two ships, "Charles" and "James," and asked him to interfere in behalf of the Royal Company at The Hague, Downing promised to do what he could, but since he was so well acquainted with the Dutch method of treating such complaints he did not anticipate favorable results. "God help them," he declared, "if they (the Royal Company) depend upon paper relief." With the duke of York at the head of the Company and the king

<sup>49</sup> Add. MSS., 22,919, f. 262.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,920, f. 24, affidavit of William Crawford and others, before the Admiralty High Court, February 13, 1663/4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,919, f. 262, Wilree to the officers of the ship James, November 9, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,920, f. 24, affidavit of Crawford and others, February 13, 1663/4.



as well as many of his courtiers greatly concerned in its welfare, he considered that it would be well cared for. "Whatever injuries the Dutch do them," he exclaimed, "let them be sure to do the Dutch greater, & then let me alone to mediate between them, but without this all other wayes will signify not a rush."<sup>53</sup>

Downing demanded of the States General whether Dirck Wilree had been given any authority to blockade the entire coasts of Comany and to forbid all English trade with the natives.<sup>54</sup> In this way he hoped either to have the States General disavow Wilree's action or to raise the question whether the West India Company had a right to institute such a blockade. In letters to Clarendon and Bennet, Downing, maintained that the Dutch were accustomed, both in West Africa and in the East Indies, to declare war on the natives and to cut them off from all trade with foreigners until they agreed to sell their goods only to the Dutch. Downing declared that the English had already lost a great deal of trade on account of such impositions, and that if they were continued the East India and African companies would be ruined. "Pay them in their own kind & sett their subjects a crying as well as his Maj<sup>ties</sup>, & you will have a very faire correspondence, & they will take heed what they doe, and his Maj<sup>tie</sup> shall be as much honored & loved here as he hath been dispised, for they love nor honor none but them that they thinck both can & dare bite them."<sup>54a</sup> After urging the king to take immediate action concerning their ships the members of the Royal Company requested Downing "to drive the States to the most positive reply." They declared that any answer would, at least, expedite matters, and "if those states will owne that Wilrey had their orders to warrant his action, wee will hope, it may begett some parel resolution of state here. If they disclaim it, and

<sup>53</sup> S. P., Holland, 167, f. 251, Downing to Williamson, September 11, 1663. O. S.

<sup>54</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, ff. 13, 14, Downing to S. G., September 17/27, 1663.

<sup>54a</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 106, f. 192, Downing to Clarendon, September 18, 1663. O. S.; S. P., Holland, 167, ff. 271, 272, Downing to Bennet.



leave their West India Company to be responsible, they will send us to a towne where there is noe house, unlesse wee pay ourselves, per legem talionis.’<sup>55</sup>

In answer to Downing’s memorial concerning the “Charles” and the “James” the West India Company confined itself to a justification of Wilree’s actions, and omitted to say anything about the authority by which they had been committed.<sup>56</sup> Although Downing insisted that a definite answer be given him on this point, the States General also evaded the issue by maintaining that nothing had been done by the company but what justice and necessity required. They supported the company in its contention that Cape Corse and Comany were effectually blockaded, and therefore the ships “Charles” and “James” had no right to trade there.<sup>57</sup>

Such a justification of the West India Company’s actions could scarcely be satisfactory to Downing or to those in charge of foreign affairs in England. The Royal Company was very much concerned also lest the Dutch would continue to interrupt the ships which it sent to the Gold Coast. To add to this adverse condition news arrived that, about the first of June, 1663,<sup>58</sup> the Dutch had at last succeeded in regaining possession of Cape Corse. At this there was much satisfaction in Holland. Downing wrote that since the Dutch now had the two important castles of Elmina and Cape Corse, commanding the most important trade in all Guinea, they intended to prohibit all other nations from trading to that region.<sup>59</sup> Over this turn of events there was great disappointment among the members of the Royal Company, who had confidently expected to obtain Cape Corse from the natives. In fact, they had intended to

<sup>55</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 22, Royal Company to Downing, September 25, 1663.

<sup>56</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 106, f. 223, Downing to Clarendon, October 2, 1663 O. S.

<sup>57</sup> S. P., Holland, 168, ff. 41, 42.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 176, f. 121.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 167, f. 284, Downing to Bennet, September 25, 1664 (O. S.).

make Cape Corse their main stronghold and at that place establish their principal trade.<sup>60</sup>

Charles II decided that it was time to come to the assistance of the Royal Company, and on September 5, 1663, he lent three of his ships to it for a voyage to Africa.<sup>61</sup> Later, he also ordered several additional royal vessels commanded by Sir Robert Holmes to accompany these ships. The preparation for the departure of the fleet was short and remained a close secret with the officials immediately concerned.

The king instructed Holmes to protect the company's agents, ships, goods, and factories from all injury; and to secure a free trade with the natives. Also, he declared, "If (upon consulta<sup>con</sup> with such command<sup>rs</sup> as are there present) you judge yorself strong enough to maintaine the right of his Ma<sup>tie</sup>'s subjects by force, you are to do it, and to kill, sink, take, or destroy such as oppose you, & to send home such shippes as you shall so take." If the two ships "Golden Lyon" and "Christiana," the first of which was the chief assailant of the company's ships "Charles" and "James" in November, 1662, were encountered, Holmes was instructed to seize them. All other ships which had committed such injuries on the vessels of the Royal Company<sup>62</sup> were likewise to be seized and taken to England. On his arrival at the mouth of the Gambia River in January, 1664, Holmes discovered that since his visit in 1661 the relations of the Dutch and English had been anything but friendly. The English commander on Charles Island had given Petro Justobaque and other Dutch factors from Cape Verde permission to trade up and down the river. Holmes heard that they had endeavored to stir up the native king of Barra against the English in December, 1661.<sup>63</sup> On the 21st of

<sup>60</sup> Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, Cunaeus to DeWitt, November 2, 1663 (N. S.).

<sup>61</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 159, warrant to duke of York, Sept. 5, 1663.

<sup>62</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 53. These instructions are not preserved in their complete form.

<sup>63</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 157, oath of William Quick and others at Charles Island, June 1, 1662.

June, 1662, Justobaque with a ship again appeared on the Gambia. In order to compel him to recognize the English rights on the river, the English commander at James Island fired at the ship. The Dutch ship paid no heed to the demand of the English and returned the fire until it was a safe distance away. A few days later as the Dutch were returning to Cape Verde the English shot away the main mast of their ship, but Justobaque managed to escape.<sup>64</sup>

Although these incidents had happened more than a year and a half before Holmes' arrival at James Island, he was incensed at the actions of the Dutch. When it was reported to him that a large Dutch vessel had arrived at Cape Verde, he assumed that it was the "Golden Lyon" which had sailed from Holland about the same time as he had departed from England. Several English ships were expected on the Gambia and for fear of their capture by the "Golden Lyon" Holmes sailed at once for Cape Verde, where, according to his statement, he was fired upon by the Dutch without any provocation. Holmes returned the fire, and after suffering some damage withdrew from the attack. On the following morning he was surprised, he declared, to see that the Dutch had hung out a white flag and were sending a boat to him offering to surrender the fort. He called a council which, after considering the former hazards of the English trade on the Gambia, decided "that the better to protect our trade for a tyme and sooner to bring in Hollander's West India Comp<sup>a</sup> to adjust our nation's damages sustained by them, and to that end we accepted the surrender of that place."<sup>65</sup>

Holmes' explanation of the taking of Cape Verde, although simple and direct, is probably incomplete. His whole career shows him to have been a man who was likely

<sup>64</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 154, deposition of Stephen Ustick, June 7, 1664; S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 147, 148.

<sup>65</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 148, Holmes' narrative. After taking the island Holmes sent for as many men as could be spared by the Royal Company's factors on the Gambia. Accordingly they took possession of it in the name of the company. C. O. 1: 18, f. 24.



to take the initiative, so that it is not surprising to learn from the depositions of various Dutchmen that, previous to the battle of Cape Verde, Holmes had seized two Dutch vessels, and that, after receiving an unfavorable reply to his demand to surrender, Holmes attacked the fort at Cape Verde, which capitulated together with several Dutch vessels.<sup>66</sup>

From the conflicting statements made by the Dutch and the English it is difficult to ascertain the truth regarding the events immediately preceding the attack on Cape Verde, but the fact remains that Holmes had obtained a number of Dutch vessels and was master of one of their most important forts on the west coast of Africa. Since he had discovered the ease with which the Dutch possessions could be seized, Holmes next set out down the coast toward Elmina. On the way he despoiled the Dutch factory at Sestos, on the pretext that at that place the Dutch had stirred up the natives against the English.<sup>67</sup> Shortly afterwards, he encountered and captured the "Golden Lyon" which had added to its notorious career by preventing the "Mary," a ship belonging to the Royal Adventurers, from trading on the Gold Coast in March, 1663.<sup>68</sup> Finally he seized the Dutch factory at Anta, on the ground that it was commanded by the former captain of the "Christiana," one of the Dutch ships designated for seizure in the king's instructions.<sup>69</sup>

Before leaving the Gambia, Holmes had been apprised of what had taken place on the Gold Coast since the Dutch had captured Cape Corse in June, 1663. After the Dutch had taken possession of this fortress General Valckenburg despatched a very strong protest to the chief English factory at Kormentine, in which he maintained that the Dutch

<sup>66</sup> Aitzema, XI, 294, deposition of Andries C. Vertholen, June 9, 1664 (N. S.); Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, depositions, June 19 and July 19, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>67</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 90, resolution of the council of war on board the Jersey, April 9, 1664.

<sup>68</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Engeland, deposition of John Denn, commander of the ship Mary, December 3, 1663 (O. S.).

<sup>69</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 149, Holmes' narrative.

had a right to the exclusive possession of the whole Gold Coast by reason of their conquest of the Portuguese. He required the English to leave the lodge which they had recently built at Tacorary and demanded that they refrain from all trade on the Gold Coast. He even had the temerity to claim that the English had injured the Dutch trade at Cape Corse and Tacorary to the extent of sixty marks of gold per month, and that the Dutch had lost one thousand marks on account of the interference of English ships such as the "Charles" and the "James."<sup>70</sup>

In answer to Valckenburg's sweeping assertions Francis Selwin, the English chief at Kormentine, and John Stoakes, commander of one of the English ships, replied that the English had more right to Cape Corse and other places on the Gold Coast than the Dutch, because they had first settled and fortified Cape Corse with the consent of the natives in 1649.<sup>71</sup> As a further indication that they were not intimidated by the hostile attitude of Valckenburg the English commenced to build another factory at Anashan in the Fantin region. In September, 1663, this brought forth another vigorous protest from Valckenburg, who declared that he would not tolerate the continuance of this factory.<sup>72</sup> By way of enforcing these threats the Dutch prevented the "Sampson," another ship belonging to the Royal Adventurers, from engaging in any trade at the factory of Komenda.<sup>73</sup> Thereupon Stoakes declared that, although the English greatly desired to live in peace with the Dutch, they would not under any circumstances abandon their factory at Anashan.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> S. P., Holland, 176, ff. 118-123, June 7, 1663 (N. S.). A mark of gold was supposed to be worth about £28. 16s.

<sup>71</sup> Index op het Register der Contracten, letters dated June 13, 14, 1663. 1663.

<sup>72</sup> S. P., Holland, 167, ff. 258-260, September 12, 1663. This protest with that of Valckenburg of June 7, 1663, was sent to England, where both were regarded as very important.

<sup>73</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 153, 154, Mr. Brett to the Royal Company, August 31, 1663; Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal, Downing to S. G., September 15, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>74</sup> Index op het Register der Contracten, September 17, 1663.



At this time the English had factories and settlements at Kormentine, Komenda, Tacorary, Anto, Anashan, Ardra, and Wiamba. The forts and lodges of the two companies were all located within a few miles of one another and for either company to increase the number of its settlements only made the occasions of friction between them more numerous.<sup>75</sup> It seemed that whichever company was able to overcome the other would be sure to do so. It was under these circumstances that Sir Robert Holmes made his appearance on the Gold Coast. The fact that the Dutch had laid claim to the whole Gold Coast was sufficient excuse for his interference, although, if we may believe the Dutch version, Holmes exceeded their claims by reasserting the English right to the whole of the west coast of Africa, as he had done at Cape Verde in 1661.<sup>76</sup>

Be this as it may, according to Holmes' account, Captain Cubitt of the Royal Company endeavored to induce Valckenburg to come to an amicable adjustment of the troubles on the Gold Coast. Holmes expected that his previous seizures would induce such a settlement, but Valckenburg obstinately refused Holmes' demand to evacuate Cape Corse.<sup>77</sup> Since he had failed to intimidate the Dutch, Holmes sailed to Cape Corse where he visited the Danish fort of Fredericksburg. The Dutch fired at him from Cape Corse, an act which Holmes regarded as the beginning of war.<sup>78</sup> He called a council of officers and factors of the

<sup>75</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 153, 154, contains a number of extracts of letters from factors of the Royal Company to the company dated from June to September, 1663. They mention many other conflicts with the Dutch, including the charge that the Dutch had hired the natives to attack the fort at Kormentine.

<sup>76</sup> Aitzema, XI, 295, deposition of Andries C. Vertholen, June 9, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>77</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 39, order of the council of war held on board the Jersey, May 7, 1664.

<sup>78</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 51, 52, Holmes' examination. In his examination before the Privy Council Holmes asserted that in one of the ships captured from the Dutch, orders had been found from the States General commanding the Dutch factors to seize the English fort at Kormentine. There is no evidence to support this assertion and the States General afterwards characterized the statement as "an errand invention & a fowle lye." S. P., Holland, 181, f. 10.



Royal Company on May 7, 1664, where, after considering "theire (the Dutch) unjust possessing of that very castle of Cape Coast indubitably ours, . . . wee then resolved att that councill . . . for the better securitye of that trade, our interest in that countrys, and to regaine our nacion's rights, to reduce that castle of Cape Coast w<sup>ch</sup> accordingly succeeded."<sup>79</sup> On pretexts of much the same character Holmes seized the Dutch factories of Agga and Anamabo, together with several ships. By this time the Dutch were stripped of all their settlements on the African coast except the main fortress of Elmina. In finishing his account of the expedition Holmes blandly remarked, "I hope I have nott exceeded my instructions, they being to conserve our comerce."

Since it is not essential to follow Holmes across the Atlantic to New Amsterdam one may return to the negotiations which were proceeding in Europe subsequent to his departure from England. So closely had the secret of Holmes' expedition to Africa been guarded that it is even doubtful if Sir George Downing at The Hague was aware of it.<sup>80</sup> As far as the purpose of the voyage was concerned nothing could have been nearer the advice which he had been urging for months. Moreover, Downing was not alone in his opinion that negotiation regarding affairs in Africa would be fruitless. The Danish resident at The Hague, Carisius, who was pressing the Danish claims for the possession of Cape Corse, confessed to Downing that nothing could be obtained from the Dutch unless it was "attended with some thing that was reall & did bite."<sup>81</sup> Since this was the case Downing pointed out that the Danish fort at Fredericksburg would probably fall into the hands of the Dutch. To avoid this misfortune he advised the Royal Company

<sup>79</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 150, 151, Holmes' account; C. O. 1: 18, f. 39, order of the council of war held on board the Jersey, May 7, 1664.

<sup>80</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 32, Downing to Bennet, January 10, 1664/5 (O. S.). This letter, written over a year later, shows that Downing was not acquainted with Holmes' instructions.

<sup>81</sup> Lister, Thomas Henry, *Life and Administration of Edward, first Earl of Clarendon*, III, 259, Downing to Clarendon, November 6, 1663 (O. S.).

to induce the Danes to transfer Fredericksburg to it, granting them in return a free commerce at that place. As the Royal Company did not see fit to follow this suggestion<sup>82</sup> Downing began to form other plans. In order that Carisius might continue to worry the Dutch with his claims Downing submitted a memorial to the States General protesting against the Dutch treatment of the Danes in Guinea.<sup>83</sup> Indeed he was so friendly toward the Danish pretensions that the king of Denmark sent him a special letter thanking him for his services.<sup>84</sup>

In the main, however, Downing was persistently urging the Dutch to make a settlement of the cases of the Royal Company's two ships, the "Charles" and the "James," and of the right of the Dutch to blockade the Gold Coast on the pretext of war with the natives. In December, 1663, at the instigation of the West India Company, the States General maintained that only a few ships were necessary to blockade the small native states on the Gold Coast, since in each case there were but one or two outlets to the sea.<sup>85</sup> On February 1, 1664, Downing obtained a conference with DeWitt and the representatives of the States General and the West India Company. The company's representatives boldly admitted that they had hindered the English ships from trading at Komenda and Cape Corse, because the natives had burned their factory at the former place and had seized their fortress at Cape Corse. This irritating assumption of their ownership of Cape Corse aroused Downing. So far, he had contented himself in supporting the Danish and even the Swedish claims to Cape Corse. Now, notwithstanding the inconsistency of his position, he remarked that, if it was a question of the ownership of Cape Corse, the English could show more rights to the place than any

<sup>82</sup> S. P., Holland, 168, f. 230, Downing to Bennet, December 18, 1663.

<sup>83</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 107, f. 101, Downing to S. G., February 8, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>84</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 26, Schested to Downing, February 10, 1664; S. P., Denmark, 17, f. 150, Frederick III to Schested, December 15, 1663.

<sup>85</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Engeland, W. I. C. to S. G., read December 1, 1663 (N. S.); *ibid.*, S. G. to Downing, December, 1663.



one, since they had been the first to settle it and to trade there; and that, even if the Dutch were in possession of it, the English still had a right to trade to the Danish fort of Fredericksburg, which was located in the same harbor.<sup>86</sup>

When the discussion turned on the requirements of an effective blockade the Dutch advocate stoutly maintained that "it is nott for any other to prescribe how and in what manner the company shall proceed to retake their places, that if they think that the riding with a few shippes before a place and that att certaine times onely whereby to hinder other nations from trading with it, be a sufficient meanes for the retaking thereof, they have no reason to be att further charge or trouble." He further declared that a certain sickness in that region, known as "Serenes," caused by the falling dew, made it impossible for Europeans to engage in a blockade by land, and therefore "in this case itt was to be counted sufficient and to be called a besieging, though the place were onely blocked up by sea."<sup>87</sup> Downing scoffed at this as an unheard of theory and asked what would happen if the Royal Company instituted blockades of this character and pretended "Serenes" whenever it seemed convenient. With such a display of feeling it is no wonder little could be done toward adjusting the difficulties. DeWitt suggested a new treaty for the regulation of such affairs both in Europe and abroad. Downing flatly refused to consider such a proposition if it was meant thereby to dispose of the cases of the "Charles" and the "James." He remained firm in his demand for reparation for these two ships.<sup>88</sup> A few days after this conference Downing learned of the misfortunes which had befallen the Royal Company's ship, the "Mary," during the previous year. On February 16, he apprised the States General of this additional cause for complaint and de-

<sup>86</sup> S. P., Holland, 169, ff. 120, 121, Downing to (Bennet), February 12, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 121.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 122, 124.



manded satisfaction as in the case of the other two vessels.<sup>89</sup>

If Downing was becoming exasperated, the people in England were scarcely less so when they heard of the troubles of the "Mary" and other similar occurrences. Secretary Cunaeus declared that the animosity in England towards Holland was growing exceedingly among the common people. Led by the duke of York, governor of the Royal Company, the courtiers had also become exceedingly indignant at the treatment accorded the company's ships and factories in Africa.<sup>90</sup> One of Valckenburg's statements regarding the Dutch ownership of the Gold Coast had been circulated on the Royal Exchange, where it became the chief topic of conversation. Indeed so great was the sensation it stirred up that Samuel Pepys declared on April 7, 1664, that everybody was expecting a war.<sup>91</sup> On the 21st of April the members of the House of Commons resolved that the damages inflicted by the Dutch in India, Africa, and elsewhere constituted a very great obstruction to English trade. They, therefore, petitioned the king for redress for these various injuries, and promised to support any action he took with their lives and fortunes.

At last the Dutch realized that the African situation was becoming serious, and Downing therefore found it somewhat easier to bring them to a discussion of the subject. DeWitt proposed that the case of the three Royal Company's ships as well as that of two East India ships, the "Bona Esperanza" and the "Henry Bonaventure," should be included in the list of damages provided for by the treaty of September, 1662. Downing absolutely refused to consider such a makeshift on the ground that the ships of the Royal Company had been injured after the treaty had been signed, and therefore in accordance with its pro-

<sup>89</sup> S. P. Holland, 169, f. 132, Downing to S. G., February 16, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>90</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to ?DeWitt, March 11/21, 1664.

<sup>91</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 103; *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to ?DeWitt (April 8/18, 1664, N. S.).

visions these losses should be submitted to the Netherlands for compensation.<sup>92</sup>

Since he had failed to induce Downing to permit the three ships to be included in the list of damages, DeWitt had exhausted the last means of delay. On May 6, 1664, Downing announced in letters to Bennet and Clarendon that DeWitt had at last consented to accommodate the matter of the three ships. He was willing, moreover, to enter into an agreement, for the prevention of all such future troubles, along the lines which Downing had laid down. Regarding the two East India ships, however, whose case was quite different from those of the Royal Company, DeWitt would not alter his stubborn refusal of compensation. Downing was intent on gaining a complete victory and at once rejoined that no new commercial regulations could be considered until entire satisfaction had been rendered for the damages which the Dutch had committed.<sup>93</sup>

Although an attempt was made to suppress the first tidings of Holmes' actions on the Gambia, the rumor of them soon spread. It was not long until it was well known in London and Amsterdam that he had taken Cape Verde and captured several Dutch vessels.<sup>94</sup> The West India Company bitterly accused the English of having covered their designs in Africa with a cloak of complaints regarding the Royal Company's ships. The company reminded the States General that this was the same Holmes who, in 1661, had set up a claim to the whole coast and who was to have been exemplarily punished on his return by the king of England. Since it was evident that all the Dutch factories and forts in Guinea were in danger of capture from Holmes, the company asked the States General for some

<sup>92</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 107, f. 147, Downing to Clarendon, April 1, 1664 (O. S.); Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, p. 424, article XIV.

<sup>93</sup> S. P., Holland, 170, ff. 16-18, Downing to Bennet, May 6, 1664 (O. S.); Clar. St. Paps., 107, ff. 195, 196, Downing to Clarendon, May 6, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>94</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to DeWitt, May 6/16, 1664; *Secretekas, Engeland*, no. 123, Cunaeus to the directors of W. I. C., May 6/16, 1664.



vessels of war which should be sent to the African coast for the protection of its property.<sup>95</sup>

It was now the turn of the Dutch to seek compensation and restitution of their property. Since Downing was a very exasperating man with whom to deal they were undoubtedly pleased when toward the end of May, 1664, he suddenly returned to England.<sup>96</sup> The Dutch, therefore, decided to send VanGogh to London, with the hope that he could obtain more satisfactory results there than had ever been possible with Downing at The Hague. VanGogh was instructed to seek for the restitution of the West India Company's property; to remind the king of the unfulfilled promises which he had made regarding Holmes and the voyage of 1661;<sup>97</sup> and to seek for new commercial regulations which would prevent future trouble on the African coast.<sup>98</sup>

Very soon after his arrival in England VanGogh gained an audience with the king who, in reply to his demands, answered that as yet his knowledge of the Holmes' affair was very imperfect; that he had not given Holmes orders to seize Cape Verde; and that in case he had exceeded his instructions he would be punished upon his return, according to the exigency of the case.<sup>99</sup> Such a reply sounded too much like the king's former promise of August 14, 1661, to satisfy DeWitt. He instructed VanGogh to insist that his Majesty make these promises in writing.<sup>100</sup> VanGogh answered DeWitt that it was hopeless to think of inducing the English to return Cape Verde, in view of the preparations then in progress for carrying on trade to the west coast of Africa. He declared that already they were boast-

<sup>95</sup> Secretakas, Engeland, no. 123, W. I. C. to S. G., May 23, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>96</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 129, Downing to Bennet, December 30, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>97</sup> Resolution of S. G., June 13, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, June 5, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>99</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, f. 174, VanGogh to S. G., June 24/July 4, 1664.

<sup>100</sup> DeWitt, *Brieven* (DeWitt, Johan, *Brieven, geschreven ende gewisselt tusschen den Heer Johan de Witt ende gevolmagtigden*), IV, 311, DeWitt to VanGogh, July 11, 1664 (N. S.).



ing in London that a contract was to be made with the Spanish for the delivery of 4,000 slaves per annum.<sup>101</sup> As early as the middle of June the Royal Company had eight ships loading in London with goods worth 50,000 pounds destined for the Guinea coast.<sup>102</sup>

In midsummer, 1664, Andries C. Vertholen and other Dutchmen, whom Holmes had carried from Cape Verde to the Gold Coast, returned to Holland, where they reported at length Holmes' actions at Cape Verde and on the way to the Gold Coast.<sup>103</sup> These details did not tend to DeWitt's peace of mind. Hence it is no wonder, upon Downing's return to Holland, that the two men "fell very hard upon the busines of Cabo Verde" in their very first conversation. As he had instructed VanGogh to do, so DeWitt demanded of Downing that the English king make a written promise that no more hostilities would be committed on the Guinea Coast, or the Dutch would be in duty bound to assist their company. Downing, who now felt the advantage which the success of Holmes' expedition gave him, replied to DeWitt as follows: "I must say," that the West India Company has "ever since his Maj<sup>ty</sup>'s return played the devills & pirats, worse th<sup>n</sup> Argiers, taken 20 English ships, hindered others, putt out a declaration whereby they claymed al the coast to thmselves; & was it lawfull for th<sup>m</sup> so to demean thmselves & only lawfull for the English to suffer, th<sup>t</sup> yet his Majty did not intermeddle, but only the one company against the other, & no wonder if at last the English did stirr a little; & th<sup>t</sup> Holms was the companye's serv<sup>t</sup> & th<sup>t</sup> should his Maj<sup>ty</sup> have given or lent th<sup>m</sup> an old ship or two, yet he had nothing to doe in the ordering their designe." Furthermore, he declared that if

<sup>101</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, July 15/25, 1664.

<sup>102</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 4: 122; S. P., Dom., Charles II, 99, f. 170, petition of the Royal Company for a convoy for its ships. It was also reported that the duke of York was fitting out a frigate at his own expense to send to Guinea. C. S. P., Dom., 1663-1664, p. 264, newsletter, September 2, 1663.

<sup>103</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, f. 238, W. I. C. to S. G., July 21, 1664 (N. S.).

the Dutch took it upon themselves to assist the West India Company "his Majesty would find himself equally obliged to assist his company."<sup>104</sup>

To every one it now seemed as if an open conflict must come. Toward the last of July, Pepys declared that all the talk was of a Dutch war,<sup>105</sup> although even Coventry, a director of the Royal Company, admitted that there was little real cause for it and that the damage done to the company, which had brought on Holmes' expedition, did not exceed the paltry sum of two or three hundred pounds.<sup>106</sup> In Holland, also, the disposition toward war was increased by the realization that the next report from Holmes might bring news of the total loss of the Gold Coast, including the main fortress of Elmina. Under these circumstances the king's promise to punish Holmes according to the exigency of the case meant little or nothing. The maritime provinces, especially Holland, were determined to assist the West India Company against English aggression in Africa.

When Downing discussed the situation with DeWitt, however, he was surprised to hear him still express the possibility of giving satisfaction for the seizure of the Royal Company's ships, and not "so hott" for sending a fleet immediately to Guinea as he had been at first.<sup>107</sup> Even Downing was for the time being deceived. His spy, who was well within DeWitt's immediate circle, for once was not on duty to give his usual faithful report to his benefactor. DeWitt was accustomed to resort to the same trickery and deceitful diplomacy that was so characteristic of Downing. Indeed it would be difficult to decide which of these two men was the greater master of this questionable art. The English had sent Holmes to Africa totally unknown to the Dutch and had taken half the coast

<sup>104</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 39-41, Downing to Clarendon, July 22, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>105</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 202.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, 143.

<sup>107</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 48, 49, Downing to Clarendon, July 29, 1664 (O. S.).



from them before they were even aware of the expedition. It is little wonder then that the idea occurred to DeWitt to retaliate in kind on the English and to keep his plans a profound secret.

In 1661 the Dutch had sent a fleet under Admiral DeRuyter to the Mediterranean Sea in conjunction with an English squadron commanded by Sir John Lawson, for the purpose of punishing the Algerian and other pirates who had been infesting Dutch and English commerce. DeRuyter and Lawson had succeeded in making a number of favorable treaties with the pirates, though the task of quelling them was by no means completed. DeWitt realized that a fleet could scarcely be dispatched to Guinea from Holland without being discovered. Therefore, he together with six of his councillors decided to send secret orders to DeRuyter to sail at once for the coast of Guinea. On account of a peculiarity of the Dutch government, however, it was impossible to dispatch these orders without first securing a resolution of the States General. DeWitt was well aware that somehow these resolutions of the States General usually became known to Downing and the English. He therefore determined that, while the States General should pass the order, he would arrange the matter so that no one would know of it, except those who were already in the plan. On August 11, 1664, the secretary of the States General read the resolution very quickly, during which time DeWitt and his six cohorts raised so much disturbance by loud conversation that no one in the room heard what was being read.<sup>108</sup> The trick succeeded admirably. DeWitt was now in possession of the necessary authority, and orders were dispatched at once to DeRuyter to leave his post in the Mediterranean and to sail for the west coast of Africa without revealing his destination to Lawson, the English commander. He was instructed to recover for the West India Company those places which Holmes had seized and to deliver to Valckenburg, the Dutch general on the Gold

<sup>108</sup> Brandt, Gerard, *La Vie de Michel de Ruiter*, pp. 212-213.



Coast, all the effects of the English which were not necessary for the different factories of the company.<sup>109</sup>

In order not to arouse Downing's suspicions by apparent apathy, the Dutch began to prepare several ships ostensibly for Africa. For the purpose of misleading Downing still further the Dutch agreed to accept an offer made by the French for mediation of the difficulties. DeWitt still insisted, however, that a written promise be given him that the forts and factories which Holmes had seized on the African coast would be restored to the West India Company.<sup>110</sup> Later, in the same month of August, 1664, Downing submitted to the States General the draft of a proposed agreement for the settling of future disputes in the East Indies and in Africa.<sup>111</sup> Downing was of the opinion that, although the Dutch could never be depended on to keep such an agreement, it would be a good thing in the East Indies because "ye (the English) are the weaker ther." In Africa the situation appeared different to Downing, for there the English had the advantage. "I hope in the meantime," he declared, "while we are (negotiating) Holmes will doe the work ther," because there "never will be such a opportunity as this to make clear work in Affrica."<sup>112</sup> A few days later he advised that everything on the African coast should be done "so as (the) king of England may not appeare in it, but only (the) R<sup>n</sup> Company, & they takeing occasion from our affront."<sup>113</sup> Still later he asserted that even in Holland everyone believed that since the king and the Royal Company had gone so far, they would seize the entire African coast so that the whole affair might be worth while.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 213, 214, 217.

<sup>110</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, ff. 23, 24, Downing to Bennet, August 4, 1664 (O. S.); *ibid.*, ff. 124, 125, Downing to Bennet, August 26, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>111</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, ff. 119, 120, Downing to S. G., August 25, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 25, Downing to Bennet, August 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 56, Downing to Bennet, August 12, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>114</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 75, 76, Downing to Clarendon, August 26, 1664 (O. S.).

Although DeWitt had been successful in sending the secret orders to DeRuyter concerning his voyage to Guinea, he could not long hope to deceive the ever-watchful Downing. Indeed with all due respect to his crafty rival one is almost surprised that Downing's suspicions were not aroused for more than a month after the commands were despatched. When the possibility of DeRuyter's having been ordered to Africa dawned on Downing, he at once demanded of DeWitt where DeRuyter was going when he left Cadiz. Without hesitation DeWitt replied that he had returned to Algiers and Tunis to ransom some Dutch people.<sup>115</sup> The bald falsehood disarmed Downing's suspicions and, although he advised that Sir John Lawson keep a watchful eye on DeRuyter, he assured Bennet that the report that the latter had gone to Guinea was without foundation.<sup>116</sup> The report continued to be whispered about,<sup>117</sup> however, and although two weeks later DeWitt repeated his falsehood, Downing began to fear that he was being deceived. He declared that although he was certain that the States General had given no orders in the usual way for DeRuyter's departure to Guinea, he was very well aware that the Dutch could find means to do those things which they deemed necessary. The more he considered the matter, the more probable it seemed to him that secret orders had been given to DeRuyter. "I am sure if I were in their case, I would do it," he finally declared, and therefore he again advised Bennet to have Sir John Lawson watch DeRuyter closely.<sup>118</sup>

The news of Holmes' success at Cape Verde had stirred up extraordinary activity in the Royal Company. In September, 1664, the company was busily enlisting factors and

<sup>115</sup> Lister, *Life of Clarendon*, III, 344, Downing to Clarendon, September 9, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>116</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 171, Downing to Bennet, September 9, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>117</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 82, Downing to Clarendon, September 16, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>118</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 241, Downing to Bennet, September 23, 1664 (O. S.).



soldiers for the Guinea coast. A number of ships, several of which belonged to the king, and some of which the company hired, were being prepared for the voyage to Guinea.<sup>119</sup> To add to the company's bright prospects, a vessel from the Gold Coast arrived in England at the end of September,<sup>120</sup> bringing the account of Holmes' capture of Cape Corse and other factories on the African coast. The Royal Company now saw itself master of West Africa. Pepys declared that the news from Holmes would certainly make the Dutch quite "mad."<sup>121</sup> It did indeed create a very great impression in Holland, where many had believed that Cape Corse was impregnable. Downing, of course, rejoiced exceedingly. Oftentimes in the past he had supported the Danish and Swedish claims to Cape Corse, but now he found no difficulty in showing Carisius and Applebome, the Danish and Swedish representatives at The Hague, that their claims were as before, against the Dutch. Omitting to say anything of the English claim to Cape Corse Downing explained to them that since the Dutch had been in possession of Cape Corse, Holmes had seized it together with other places on account of the numerous injuries done to the Royal Company. "They both replied that they took it so."<sup>122</sup>

In London, VanGogh lost no time in obtaining an interview with Charles II concerning Holmes' latest activities. Again the king asserted that Holmes' violent actions on the African coast were without his knowledge, especially the affair at Cape Verde, which place he declared was of no importance and not worth one hundred pounds.<sup>123</sup> Regarding

<sup>119</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, VanGogh to S. G., September 23/October 3, 1664.

<sup>120</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 254; *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, VanGogh to S. G., September 30/October 10, 1664.

<sup>121</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 254.

<sup>122</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 35, Downing to Bennet, October 7, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>123</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 3/13, 1664. A few days after this VanGogh very much annoyed the king by bringing up the Cape Verde incident again. The king burst out, "And pray, what is Cape Verde? A stinking place



his responsibility for the capture of Cape Corse he refrained from committing himself so definitely, but he assured the Dutch ambassador that Cape Corse belonged to the English; that their claim to it would be satisfactorily established; and that he intended to preserve these new acquisitions by sending Prince Rupert with a fleet to the coast of Africa.<sup>124</sup> On the 28th of October, after learning of Holmes' capture of New Amsterdam, Charles II boldly threw aside his reserve and declared that the taking of Cape Corse, as well as of New Amsterdam, "was done with his knowledge & by his order as being a business w<sup>ch</sup> properly belonged to the English, that the ground was theirs & that they had also built upon the same, that the same was afterwards taken from the English by the Netherlands West India Comp<sup>a</sup>, & . . . that the English will justify & demonstrate their right to all this."<sup>125</sup> If Holmes' actions in Guinea have so far seemed very extraordinary, they can hardly be so regarded any longer in view of the light which the king himself threw over the whole situation in this remarkable statement. To be sure he had not as yet assumed responsibility for the capture of Cape Verde. However, his direct responsibility for the other actions of Holmes, which were much more important, makes it a matter of little consequence whether the capture of Cape Verde is to be attributed to him or not.

It may have seemed to Downing that there was less excuse for the seizure of Cape Verde than for the other places. At any rate he held out some hope to DeWitt that it would be restored to the Dutch. This must have been a bitter sop to DeWitt, who was well aware that as for Cape

(using these very words): Is this of such importance to make so much ado about? As much as I could ever yet learne of it, it is of noe use at all." S. P., Holland, 172, f. 158, VanGogh to Ruysch, October 24, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>124</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 3/13, 1664.

<sup>125</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 178, VanGogh to Ruysch, November 7, 1664 (N. S.); DeWitt, *Brieven*, IV, 387, 390, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 28/November 7, October 31/November 10, 1664.

Corse he need entertain no such hope.<sup>126</sup> There was one feature of the situation, however, which somewhat pleased DeWitt.<sup>127</sup> Downing could no longer maintain that the troubles in Guinea were merely quarrels between two commercial companies in which the king had no direct interest or connection. DeWitt would therefore not be at a loss when the time came for defending that action to find numerous reasons why DeRuyter had been sent to Africa.

By this time every one in London and Amsterdam was in a state of extreme suspense as to whether or not DeRuyter was on the Guinea coast. On the 14th of October, 1664, news had been received in Holland and in England from Cadiz to the effect that DeRuyter intended to sail to Guinea upon his departure from that port.<sup>128</sup> In Amsterdam, encouraged by this vigorous rumor, the stocks of the West India Company began to rise from the low point where they had been for some time.<sup>129</sup> When Downing chided DeWitt about DeRuyter, the latter told him, in a bantering fashion if he believed the report, notwithstanding what had been said to the contrary, to continue in the belief; it could do no harm.<sup>130</sup> In London, the apprehension of DeRuyter's expedition greatly checked the enthusiasm of the Royal Company, and caused the king to postpone Prince Rupert's departure to the African coast. VanGogh reported the cry that was heard everywhere in London, "Guinea is lost. What now is it possible to do with the Dutch."<sup>131</sup> The Dutch ambassador, who did not

<sup>126</sup> DeWitt, *Brieven*, IV, 390, DeWitt to VanGogh, November 14, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>127</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 126, Downing to Clarendon, November 11, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 100, Downing to Clarendon, October 14, 1664 (O. S.); *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, October 14/24, 1664.

<sup>129</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 108, Downing to Clarendon, October 28, 1664 (O. S.); *ibid.*, f. 120, Downing to Clarendon, November 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 117, Downing to Clarendon, November 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>131</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 17/27, 1664.

cease to haunt the king's chambers over Holmes' seizures, found Charles II irritable and greatly displeased with affairs. When questioned as to whether he would punish Holmes, the king declared that Holmes did not need to fear punishment at home, since the Dutch had evidently sent forces to do it themselves.<sup>132</sup>

The news concerning DeRuyter's successful expedition to the African coast, which arrived in England just before Christmas, 1664, showed, as Pepys expressed it, that the English had been "beaten to dirt at Guinea."<sup>133</sup> Indeed DeRuyter's conquest of the coast in the end was as complete as that of Holmes.<sup>134</sup> With one exception DeRuyter captured all the English factories and forts, including Kormentine, which he delivered with their goods to the agents of the West India Company. The English retained only Cape Corse, which, because of its strong position and the loyalty of the natives, DeRuyter decided would offer a successful resistance.<sup>135</sup>

Up to the time that DeRuyter departed for the African coast it is conceivable that by mutual concessions the troublesome questions existing between England and the United Provinces might have been amicably settled. The Dutch, however, had decided that this could not be done with honor and advantage to themselves, and therefore they chose to answer the warlike actions of Holmes in kind. When the English learned of DeRuyter's activities on the African coast the growing animosity between the two countries was so greatly intensified that war was inevitable. The members of the Royal Company who realized the grav-

<sup>132</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 19, VanGogh to Ruysch, December 5, 1664 (N. S.). The duke of York was known to be very favorable to Holmes at the same time. S. P., Dom., Charles II, 105, f. 176, Coventry to Bennet, November 27, 1664.

<sup>133</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 312.

<sup>134</sup> He arrived at Cape Verde October 22, 1664, and left the Gold Coast February 27, 1665.

<sup>135</sup> In this account it seems unnecessary to give the details of the capture of these places. They may be found at length in Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 223 to 265.



ity of the situation begged the king to come to the company's assistance.<sup>136</sup> The king, who considered the company to be of great importance to the colonial trade, and who realized his own intimate connection with its formation, declared on January 2, 1665, that he was resolved "to assist, protect & preserve the said company in the prosecution of their said trade,"<sup>137</sup> a declaration which was tantamount to war.

The Anglo-Dutch war of 1665-7 was, therefore, as has long been known, a war over trade privileges. Furthermore, in the popular mind, it was the dispute over trading privileges on the West African coast which "became the Occasion, at least the Popular Pretence of the war with Holland."<sup>138</sup> In international disputes some facts, although of minor importance, are often seized upon with great vigor by the contending parties. It is very probable that both England and the United Provinces greatly overestimated the value of the African forts and factories, but, at that time, the possession of them seemed very important. To many of these places plausible claims were advanced by both the English and the Dutch. There was plenty of opportunity therefore for disputes, and the representatives of the two great commercial companies did not fail to utilize it.

If the factors of the two companies in Guinea found it impossible to reconcile their differences, the same observation may be made concerning Downing and DeWitt at The Hague. One is not inclined to excuse the deceit of the latter nor to sympathize with the apathetic neglect with which he met all English claims. On the other hand, Downing was perhaps the match for DeWitt in cunning and his master in argument. His contempt for the Dutch made it distasteful for him to deal with them without gaining a complete victory. Compromise is the basis of most diplomacy, but

<sup>136</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 110, f. 19; Condition of Co., Jan. 2 (1664/5).

<sup>137</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 4.

<sup>138</sup> *The Case of the Royal African Company of England and their Creditors*, p. 6.

such a word was scarcely in Downing's vocabulary. There were men in England who realized that Downing was slowly but surely leading the two countries into war. Clarendon reproved him for overzealousness; and Lord Hollis, the English ambassador in France, informed him that he saw no "causam belli, onely litigandi," and asked him if he could not temper his speech "by pouring in oyle & not vinegar," and thus prevent a war if possible.<sup>139</sup> In Downing's behalf it may be said, however, that his attitude was the same as that of the mercantile interests in England which he so well represented. The increasing importance of the mercantile element, both in England and Holland, and their desire to encroach on the trade of one another in all parts of the world, especially in Guinea, was responsible for the war.<sup>140</sup> When the war was inevitable, representatives of the English commercial interests assured the government of their loyal support and assistance.<sup>141</sup> As for the Dutch they, too, entered the conflict with high hopes, for they did not fear Charles II as they had feared Cromwell.

Sir Robert Holmes who had been so largely responsible for the difficulties which resulted in the Anglo-Dutch war arrived in England early in January, 1665. He was ordered to surrender the ships which he had taken from the Dutch in Guinea to the Royal Company.<sup>142</sup> On the 9th of January, by way of appeasing VanGogh, he was thrown into the Tower of London,<sup>143</sup> where he was to remain, the king declared, until he gave a satisfactory account of his actions at Cape Verde. Once more it appeared as if proceedings were to be taken against him "according to the

<sup>139</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 46, Lord Hollis to (Downing), September 2/12, 1664.

<sup>140</sup> On October 30, 1664 (N. S.), d'Estrades declared to the king of France that the real cause of the war then about to begin was the desire of the king of England to become master of Guinea. *Mémoires d'Estrades*, II, 517.

<sup>141</sup> See the paper of Sir Richard Ford, one of the prominent members of the Royal Company. *Clar. St. Paps.*, 83, f. 374.

<sup>142</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1664-5, p. 164, warrant to Holmes, January 7, 1664.

<sup>143</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 138, VanGogh to Ruysch, January 9/19, 1665.



exigency of the case."<sup>144</sup> It is interesting to note that his imprisonment resulted from the capture of the one place, mention of which was omitted in his instructions. However, Holmes was not long detained in confinement. Probably on account of the influence of the duke of York and of Prince Rupert he was again set at liberty toward the last of January,<sup>145</sup> and VanGogh reported that he was even enjoying royal favor.<sup>146</sup> Apparently Holmes was unable to render a satisfactory account of his prizes to the Royal Company, however, and he was therefore reconfined in the Tower about the 24th of February.<sup>147</sup> On the third of March he was examined before the Privy Council in regard to his expedition. His explanation of the various events was found satisfactory and he was forthwith ordered to be discharged from the Tower.<sup>148</sup> This order was not executed at once because he had not even yet rendered a satisfactory account to the Company.<sup>149</sup> Royal clemency was invoked and a warrant was issued March 23, 1665, releasing him from all criminal and pecuniary charges which might be brought against him.<sup>150</sup> The king's intervention in his behalf brought to an end the connection of Sir Robert Holmes with the company's affairs on the African coast.

By concluding the account of the diplomatic relations of England and the United Provinces with the early part of 1665, it is not intended to convey the idea that all diplomatic intercourse between the two countries ceased at that time. Downing remained in The Hague until August of that year, but neither side thought seriously of attempting to prevent the struggle in which they were already engaged on the

<sup>144</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 138, VanGogh to Ruysch, January 13/23, 1665.

<sup>145</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, VanGogh to Ruysch*, January 27/February 6, 1665.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, VonGogh to Ruysch, January 30/February 9, 1665.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Cunaeus to —, February 24/March 6, 1665.

<sup>148</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 69.

<sup>149</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, (VanGogh) to Ruysch*, February 27/March 9, 1665.

<sup>150</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1664-5, p. 268, order to release Holmes, March 23, 1664/5.



African coast. DeRuyter arrived at Cape Verde on October 11, 1664, where he found nine English vessels, most of which were in the service of the Royal Company and had only recently arrived on the Guinea coast. In response to an inquiry made by the English as to his intentions DeRuyter replied that he had come to punish the Royal Company for Holmes' hostile actions. He demanded the surrender of the company's factors and goods on shore and on the several ships. Since the English were unable to resist they surrendered the goods of the Royal Company after which the vessels were permitted to depart. In this way DeRuyter attempted to show plainly that he was not carrying on hostilities against the English nation, but was only aiding the West India Company to recover its property and goods, and to punish the Royal Company for the actions of Sir Robert Holmes.

DeRuyter left a Dutch garrison at Cape Verde and started with his plunder for Elmina. On the way he despoiled the English factory on the Sierra Leone River. On December 25 he arrived on the Gold Coast and made an attack on Tacorary, where he was temporarily repulsed, but later he succeeded in blowing up this English factory. He then proceeded to unload at Elmina the effects which he had taken from the English. While doing so he received orders from the States General, dated October 21, 1664, commanding him to seize all English goods and vessels, whether they belonged to the Royal Company or not. In accordance with these instructions DeRuyter captured several English vessels, but he considered his chief duty to be the taking of the English fort at Kormentine. An agreement was made with the natives of the neighboring region of Fetu, who acted in conjunction with the Dutch ships and with the forces which DeRuyter landed. Although many of the natives remained loyal to the English, Kormentine fell an easy prey to the attacking party about the first of February, 1665. The other English factories, with the exception of Cape Corse, were also occupied without much

difficulty. Although DeRuyter had received special orders to reduce Cape Corse, he considered this impossible, on account of the ease with which it could be defended and the loyalty of the Negroes to the English cause in that territory. DeRuyter was therefore compelled to depart from the Gold Coast on his voyage to Barbadoes without having taken possession of Cape Corse.<sup>151</sup>

On April 18, 1667, Lord Hollis and Sir William Coventry, who were selected as the English envoys to treat for peace between England and the United Provinces, were instructed to propose that each country retain whatever places were in its possession on the 25th of the previous December. On the other hand, the English were also directed to induce the Dutch to give back Kormentine if possible.<sup>152</sup> How vigorously the envoys urged the return of Kormentine cannot be ascertained, but at any rate they were unsuccessful in obtaining it. When the treaty was concluded at Breda, July 21, 1667, it provided that each country should retain the territories which it held on the tenth of the previous May.<sup>153</sup> Thus ended the war which had in so large a

<sup>151</sup> The account of DeRuyter's voyage given here is a digest of what appears at much greater length in Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 223-265. A short contemporary English account may be found in C. O. 1: 19, ff. 88, 89.

<sup>152</sup> S. P., Holland, 182, ff. 246, 247. The Dutch had entertained some hopes of inducing the English to surrender Cape Corse, as is evident from negotiations which they carried on with the Swedes and the Danes. In March, 1665, a treaty was drawn up between Sweden and the United Provinces in which the former country agreed to renounce her claims of damage against the West India Company and all her rights to any places on the African coast, for which renunciation the States General was to pay 140,000 rix dollars. The treaty failed of approbation on account of the reluctance of the king of Sweden to withdraw his interests from the coast of Africa. Aitzema, XI, 1102, 1103; S. P., Holland, 174, f. 148, Downing to Bennet, February 17, 1664/5 (O. S.); S. P., Holland, 179, f. 86, Downing to Bennet, March 10, 1665 (March 10, 1664/5. O. S.).

With the Danes the Dutch had more success. On February 11, 1667, a treaty was entered into between Frederick III, of Denmark and the United Provinces, in which it was agreed that the Danes should surrender all their claims to Cape Corse, retaining, however, the adjacent fort of Fredericksburg. Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 3, p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 1, pp. 44, 45, article 3.



measure been caused by the troubles between the Royal Adventurers and the West India Company.

At the conclusion of peace between the two countries, the English cannot be said to have been in a better position on the Guinea coast than they were before the war. On the other hand, it would not be difficult to rebuild new factories at the places which they had lost during the war. Indeed at the time peace was made factories had already been settled in several places occupied before DeRuyter's expedition. Nicolas Villaut, a Frenchman who made a voyage down the coast of Guinea in the years 1666 and 1667, mentioned an English factory on one of the islands in the Sierra Leone River, another at Madra Bomba just north of Cape Mount, and still another just south of Cape Miserado.<sup>154</sup> He also mentioned the strength of the English fortress at Cape Corse, and declared that, although there was war in Europe between England and Denmark, the English factors at Cape Corse and those of the Danes at the neighboring fort of Fredericksburg made an amicable agreement to commit no acts of hostility against one another; and that this agreement was so punctually observed that the soldiers of the two nations mingled freely at all times.<sup>155</sup> Villaut failed to describe the condition of the company's fort in the Gambia River, but on October 30, 1667, an attack on it by the natives was reported to the general court of the company.<sup>156</sup> The Negroes succeeded in obtaining possession of the island but were presently dislodged by the company's factors after the loss of a number of white men.<sup>157</sup>

Inasmuch as there remain very scanty records of the company's trading activities and the manner of government instituted at its forts and factories on the African coast, it

<sup>154</sup> Villaut, *A Relation of the Coasts of Africa called Guinee*, pp. 49, 56, 75.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 131, 135. Villaut also speaks of an English fort at Eniacham (Anashan).

<sup>156</sup> A. C. R., 75: 60.

<sup>157</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 217, f. 76, John Lysle to Williamson, September 16, 1667.



is impossible to describe fully these aspects of the company's history. When the company first sent agents to the head factory at Kormentine seven men served each a month's turn as chief factor. As might have been expected trouble resulted concerning the succession.<sup>158</sup> The company therefore withdrew this order and directed that one of the factors be given charge of affairs with the title of chief agent and with a salary of one hundred pounds per year.<sup>159</sup> After the Dutch captured Kormentine in 1665, Cape Corse became the chief English factory, under the direction of Gilbert Beavis, who was replaced by Thomas Pearson in 1667. At the end of the Anglo-Dutch war the company's affairs on the African coast were at a low ebb, and the uncertainties of the Guinea trade were at once demonstrated when the former agent, Beavis, in conjunction with the natives, assaulted Cape Corse, carrying off Pearson and much of the company's goods. With the assistance of one of the Royal Company's ships the factors recovered the fort and replaced Pearson in charge of affairs, where he remained to the year 1671.<sup>160</sup>

In addition to these difficulties there was also a repetition of the petty quarrels between the agents of the Royal Company and those of the West India Company, which had so characterized the years previous to the war. When the English began to build lodges at Komenda and Agga, the Dutch general, Dirck Wilree, at once objected, claiming that the possession of the adjacent fort of Kormentine gave them exclusive rights to those places.<sup>161</sup> The English denied this claim<sup>162</sup> and sent home for more supplies to fortify Komenda. At the same time they advised the company that the licensed private traders who had appeared on the coast had very greatly injured the trade of the company's

<sup>158</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 243, John Allen to (the Royal Adventurers), December 18, 1663.

<sup>159</sup> A. C. R., 75: 3.

<sup>160</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 380, f. 57; *ibid.*, 381, ff. 138, 139.

<sup>161</sup> C. O. 1: 23, ff. 3, 4, 6, 7, Wilree to Pearson, January 23/February 2, and February 14/24, 1668.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, f. 5, Pearson to Wilree, n. d.

factories, because they sold their goods very much cheaper than the company's agents could afford to.<sup>163</sup> The renewal of the trouble between the two companies moved the general court on June 30, 1668, to ask for the king's assistance.<sup>164</sup> The information lately received from the company's agents was read in the Privy Council and referred to the committee for trade.<sup>165</sup> This committee recommended the appointment of some persons to treat with the Dutch regarding the possession of the disputed places, and Secretary Morice was therefore instructed to sound the Dutch ambassadors in London about the matter. Instructions of a similar nature were to be given to Sir William Temple, who was about to depart for the United Netherlands as the English ambassador.<sup>166</sup> At this point the matter seems to have been dropped without further discussion, and Komenda remained a subject of possible contention between the English and the Dutch for many years to come.

During the latter years of the history of the Company of Royal Adventurers the factories including Cape Corse fell into great decay, on account of the failure of the company to send out ships and supplies. Nearly all the English trade was carried on in the vessels of private traders, who in return for their licenses agreed to take one-tenth of their cargoes free of all freight charges. These goods were to be used for the maintenance of the company's factories, especially Cape Corse.<sup>167</sup> Even this provision was not sufficient, and in the latter part of November, 1670, it was found necessary to send some additional supplies for the immediate relief of Cape Corse.<sup>168</sup> The king, who was

<sup>163</sup> C. O. 1: 23, f. 2, Pearson and others to the Royal Adventurers, February 18, 1667/8.

<sup>164</sup> A. C. R., 75: 75.

<sup>165</sup> C. O. 1: 23, f. 1, petition of the Royal Adventurers (July 3), 1668; P. C. R., Charles II, 7: 374, July 3, 1668.

<sup>166</sup> P. C. R., 7: 378, July 8, 1668. The minutes of the general court for November 14, 1668, mention a letter intended to be dispatched to Sir William Temple. A. C. R., 75: 81.

<sup>167</sup> A. C. R., 100: 47, 48.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 96.

still indebted to the company for his subscription to the stock, was induced to pay a part of it. With this money two ships were despatched for the relief of Cape Corse<sup>169</sup> which had been in great distress.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> C. O. 1: 25, f. 227, estimate of charges for supplies at Cape Corse, December 19, 1670; A. C. R., 75: 106, 107.

<sup>170</sup> Foreign Entry Book, 176, minutes of the foreign committee, January 22, 1671/2.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROYAL ADVENTURERS AND THE PLANTATIONS

The early trade of the English to the coast of Africa was very largely in exchange for products which could be sold in England. Among these may be mentioned elephants' teeth, wax, malaguetta and gold. As has been shown, the hope of discovering gold mines was the principal cause of the first expedition sent to Africa by the Royal Adventurers in December, 1660. When this scheme to mine gold was abandoned the company's agents traded for gold which was brought down from the interior or washed out by the slow and laborious toil of the natives. The other African products, especially elephants' teeth, were brought to London where they sold quite readily for very good prices.

Although this direct trade between England and Africa was never neglected, the slave trade with the English colonies in the West Indies was destined to absorb the company's attention because the supply of indentured servants<sup>1</sup> was never great enough to meet the needs of the rapidly growing sugar and indigo plantations. From the planter's point of view, moreover, slaves had numerous advantages over white servants as plantation laborers. Slaves and their children after them were chattel property for life. The danger of rebellion was very small because often the slaves could not even converse with one another, since they were likely to be from different parts of Africa and therefore to speak a different dialect. Finally, neither the original outlay for slaves nor the cost of feeding and clothing them was great, and therefore slaves were regarded as more economical than indentured servants. Moreover, there was much to be said against encouraging the lower classes of England to come to the plantations, where they often en-

<sup>1</sup> These were people of the rougher and even criminal classes of the parent country who, in return for their ocean passage, agreed to work for some planter during a specified number of years, usually seven.

gaged in disturbances of one kind and another. Also, after a service of a few years, it was necessary to allow them to go where they pleased. Nevertheless, with all their disadvantages, it may be truly said that the planters preferred the white servants to any others. It was, however, impossible to obtain the needed supply of labor from this source and therefore it was always necessary to import slaves from Africa.

Previous to the accession of Charles II not many slaves were imported into the English possessions in the West Indies. Of this small number all but a few had been brought by the ships of the Dutch West India Company. The Dutch centered their West India trade at the island of Curaçao, whence they could supply not only their own colonies with slaves but those of the French, English and even the Spanish when opportunity offered. So great was the demand for slaves and other necessities procured from the Dutch that the English planters in the West Indies regarded this trade as highly desirable. For instance, when the island of Barbadoes surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, January 11, 1652, it stipulated that it should retain its freedom of trade and that no company should be formed which would monopolize its commodities.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, by the Navigation Act of 1660 colonial exports, part of which had to be carried only to England, were confined to English ships. This was a sufficient limitation of their former freedom of trade to incense the planters in the West Indies; but, as a matter of greater importance to them, the king granted to the Company of Royal Adventurers the exclusive trade to the western coast of Africa, thus limiting their supply of Negro slaves to this organization. The company therefore undertook this task, realizing that in the Negro trade it would find by far its most lucrative returns. Not only did the company supply the planters with slaves, their greatest necessity, but in exchange for these it took sugar and other

<sup>2</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1674-1675, Addenda, p. 86, articles agreed on by Lord Willoughby and Sir George Ayscue and others, January 11, 1652.



plantation products, which it carried to England. It was natural that the company should endeavor to make a success of its business. On the other hand, it was also to be expected that the planters would regard the company as a monopoly and a nuisance to be outwitted if possible.

In 1660 Barbadoes was in much the same condition as is true of every rapidly expanding new country. The settlers occupied as much land as they could obtain and directed every effort toward its cultivation and improvement. The growing of sugar had proved to be very profitable and every planter saw his gains limited only by the lack of labor to cultivate his lands. Every possible effort was therefore made to obtain laborers and machinery. Although the planters had little ready capital, they made purchases with a free hand, depending upon the returns from their next year's crop to pay off their debts. As a result, the planters were continually in debt to the merchants. The merchants greatly desired that Barbadoes should be made as dependent on England as possible in order that the constantly increasing amount of money which the planters owed them might be better secured. Moreover, they wished to prevent the planters from manipulating the laws of the island in such a way as to hinder the effective collection of debts.<sup>3</sup> The planters, on the other hand, appreciated very keenly the ill effects upon themselves of the laws which were passed in England for the regulation of commerce. They bitterly complained of the enumerated article clause of the Navigation Act of 1660, which provided that all sugars, indigo and cotton-wool should be carried only to England. Already the planters were very greatly in debt to the merchants and they saw in this new law the beginning of the restrictions by which the merchants intended to throttle their trade. Indeed it seemed to the planters as if they were completely at the mercy of the merchants, who paid what they pleased for sugar, and charged excessive

<sup>3</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 14, petitions of merchants and planters, March 1, 1661.



prices for Negroes, cattle and supplies.<sup>4</sup> Among those who were regarded as oppressors were the factors of the Royal Company, which controlled the Negro supply upon which the prosperity of the plantations depended.

Sir Thomas Modyford, speaker of the assembly, also became the agent for the Royal Adventurers in Barbadoes. Modyford was very enthusiastic about the company's prospects for a profitable trade in Negroes with the Spanish colonies. The people of Barbadoes neither shared Modyford's enthusiasm for this trade nor for the company's monopoly, because they believed that thereby the price of slaves was considerably increased. On December 18, 1662, the council and assembly of Barbadoes resolved to ask the king for a free trade to Africa or for assurance that the factors of the Royal Company would sell their slaves for the same price as other merchants.<sup>5</sup> Very shortly, the duke of York, the company's governor, informed Governor Willoughby that the company had made arrangements to provide Barbadoes and the Caribbee Islands with 3,000 slaves per annum and that the needs of the islands would be attended to as conditions changed. Moreover, the company pledged itself to see that all Negroes imported into the island should be sold by lots, as had been the custom, at the average rate of seventeen pounds per head or for commodities of the island rated at that price.<sup>6</sup> The duke of York also requested Governor Willoughby to ascertain if possible how many Negroes were desired by the planters at that rate, and to see that any planters who wished to become members of the company should be given an opportunity to do so.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, pp. 29, 30, 45, 46, 47, petitions from Barbadoes, May 11, July 10, 12, 1661.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117, minutes of the council and assembly of Barbadoes, December 18, 1662.

<sup>6</sup> The pieces of eight were to be accepted at four shillings each, and 2,400 pounds of muscovado sugar were to be accepted in exchange for a slave.

<sup>7</sup> Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter, His Royal Highness (the duke of York) and others to Lord Willoughby, January 10, 1662/3.

When the company's factors, Sir Thomas Modyford and Sir Peter Colleton, began to sell Negroes to the planters they encountered endless trouble and litigation in the collection of debts. In a vivid description of their difficulties to the company they declared that Governor Willoughby did nothing to assist them until he received several admonitions from the king. To be sure the governor's power in judicial matters was limited by the council, which in large part was made up of landholders who naturally attempted to shield the planters from their creditors. In case an execution on a debt was obtained from a local court the property remained in the hands of the debtor for eighty days. During this time the debtor often made away with the property, if it was in the form of chattel goods. If the judgment was against real estate the land also remained in the hands of the debtor for eighty days, during which time a committee, usually neighbors of the debtor, appraised the land, often above its real value. If this sum exceeded the debt, the creditor was compelled to pay the difference. As the factors declared, therefore, it was a miracle if the creditors got their money.<sup>8</sup>

In 1664, Sir Thomas Modyford was called from Barbadoes to become governor of Jamaica.<sup>9</sup> In his place the Royal Adventurers selected John Reid, who had resided for several years in Spain and was therefore conversant with the needs of the Spanish colonies concerning slaves. Reid also obtained the office of sub-commissioner of prizes in Barbadoes.<sup>10</sup>

After Modyford's departure from Barbadoes the factors still experienced great difficulty in collecting the company's debts. Although Willoughby had not exerted himself in its behalf the company informed the king that it had supplied the planters liberally with slaves, but that the planters

<sup>8</sup> C. O. 1: 18, ff. 85, 86, Modyford and Colleton to the Royal Adventurers, March 20, 1664.

<sup>9</sup> A. C. R., 75: 13, 14, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 20.



owed the company £40,000,<sup>11</sup> and that by reason of the intolerable delays in the courts it was impossible to collect this sum. Thereupon the earl of Clarendon wrote to Governor Willoughby admonishing him to take such measures as would make a renewal of the company's complaints unnecessary. In this letter Clarendon also declared that while the king had shown great care for the planters by restraining the company from charging excessive prices for slaves, he should also protect the interests of the merchants. Willoughby, therefore, was recommended to see speedy justice given to the company, and to use his influence in obtaining a better law for the collection of debts.<sup>12</sup>

To add to the company's difficulties private traders began to infringe upon the territory included in the company's charter. As an instance of this Captain Pepperell, in charge of one of the company's ships, seized an interloper called the "William and Jane" off the coast of New Calabar in Guinea. When Pepperell appeared at Barbadoes with his prize, one of the owners of the captured ship brought suit in a common law court against the company's commander for damages to the extent of 500,000 pounds of sugar. The company's factors at once went bail for Pepperell. Ordinarily the case would have been tried by a jury of planters from whom the company's agents could expect no consideration. The factors, therefore, petitioned to have the case removed from the common law courts to the admiralty court where the governor was the presiding officer. A jury of sympathetic islanders would thus be dispensed with and, if necessary, the case could be appealed to a higher court in England with greater ease. When Willoughby called the admiralty court on June 17, 1665, the factors cited the company's royal charter which justified the seizure of interlopers. Notwithstanding the clear case which the company's agents seemed to have the matter

<sup>11</sup> On January 2, 1665, the company estimated the entire debt which was owing to it in all the plantations at £49,895. S. P., Dom., Charles II, 110, f. 18, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king.

<sup>12</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 4: 177, 190-192, August 3, 24, 1664.



was adjourned for a week. Fearing that the governor might take action adverse to the company's interests the factors succeeded in sending the ship in question to Jamaica where it was not under the jurisdiction of Lord Willoughby.<sup>13</sup> The bail bonds against Pepperell were not withdrawn, and therefore he stood in as great danger of prosecution as ever. When the company learned of this situation it immediately petitioned Secretary Arlington that Willoughby be commanded not to permit any further procedures against Pepperell and to transmit the whole case to the Privy Council. It also requested that those who had transgressed the company's charter should be punished.<sup>14</sup> The Privy Council issued an order in accordance with the company's desires.<sup>15</sup> Willoughby accused the factors of having reported the case falsely and of having affronted him grossly by taking the vessel in question away from the island by stealth. Moreover, he declared that he would have made them understand his point of view "if they had not been employed by soe Royall a Compagnie."<sup>16</sup>

Since Willoughby persistently neglected to send Pepperell's bail bonds to England, the Royal Company finally reported the matter again to the king.<sup>17</sup> Once more the case was heard in the Privy Council, where it was referred to the committee on trade and plantations.<sup>18</sup> On January 31, 1668, the Privy Council issued an order to Governor Willoughby, brother of the former incumbent, commanding him to stop all proceedings against the Royal Company and commanding him to send everything in regard to the case to England without delay.<sup>19</sup> Lord Willoughby

<sup>13</sup> C. O. 1: 19, ff. 234-238, proceedings of the court of admiralty in Barbadoes, June 17, 24, 1665.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 232, petition of the Royal Adventurers to Arlington, September 14, 1665.

<sup>15</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 402, Privy Council to Willoughby, April 6, 1666.

<sup>16</sup> C. O. 1: 20, f. 209, Willoughby to Privy Council, July 16, 1666.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 335, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, December 7, 1666.

<sup>18</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 6: 231, December 7, 1666.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 7: 162, 163, Privy Council to Willoughby, January 31, 1668.

replied that so far as he could ascertain all the records had been sent to England and that if any others were found he would also despatch them.<sup>20</sup> Thus ended this contest in regard to the maintenance of the company's privileges. The king had not allowed his royal prerogative to be interfered with and the company's charter was regarded as intact. Theoretically the victory was all in favor of the company, but on account of the losses which it was incurring in the Anglo-Dutch war, it was impossible for the company to furnish a sufficient supply of Negroes to Barbadoes, that is, if Lord Willoughby's heated protests can be trusted.

Speaking of the general prohibitions on their trade, the governor exclaimed, May 12, 1666, that he had "come to where itt pinches, and if yor Ma<sup>ty</sup> gives not an ample & speedy redress, you have not onely lost St. Christophers but you will lose the rest, I (aye) & famous Barbadoes, too, I feare." In bitter terms he spoke of the poverty of the island, protesting that anyone who had recommended the various restraints on the colony's trade was "more a merchant than a good subject." The restriction on the trade to Guinea, he declared, was one of the things that had brought Barbadoes to its present condition; and the favoritism displayed toward the Royal Company in carrying on the Negro trade with the Spaniards had entirely deprived the colonial government of an export duty on slaves.<sup>21</sup>

The decision of the company to issue licenses to private traders did not allay the storm of criticism that continued to descend on the company from Barbadoes. The new governor, as his brother had done, urged a free trade to Guinea for Negroes, maintaining that slaves had become so scarce and expensive that the poor planters would be forced to go to foreign plantations for a livelihood.<sup>22</sup> He complained that the Colletons, father and son, the latter of whom was one of the company's factors, had helped to bring about

<sup>20</sup> C. O. 1: 22, f. 191, Willoughby to Privy Council, May 30, 1668.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, f. 149, Willoughby to the king, May 12, 1666.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, f. 170, Willoughby to the king, 9 July, 1667.



this critical condition.<sup>23</sup> On September 5, 1667, representatives of the whole colony petitioned the king to throw open the Guinea trade or to force the company to supply them with slaves at the prices promised in the early declaration, although even those prices seemed like a canker of usury to the much abused planters.<sup>24</sup>

Following these complaints Sir Paul Painter and others submitted a petition to the House of Commons in which they asserted that an open trade to Africa was much better than one carried on by a company. They maintained that previous to the establishment of the Royal Adventurers Negroes had been sold for twelve, fourteen and sixteen pounds per head, or 1,600 to 1,800 pounds of sugar, whereas now the company was selling the best slaves to the Spaniards at eighteen pounds per head, while the planters paid as high as thirty pounds for those of inferior grade. This, they declared, had so exasperated the planters that they often refused to ship their sugar and other products to England in the company's ships, no matter what freight rates the factors offered.

In reply to the petition of Sir Paul Painter, Ellis Leighton, the company's secretary, admitted that as a natural result of the Anglo-Dutch war the price of slaves, like all other products in Barbadoes, had increased considerably. He denied that this increase could be attributed to the sale of Negroes to the Spaniards, since the company had not disposed of more than 1,200 slaves to them. He contended that the company had been thrown into a critical financial condition, partly as the result of the losses incurred from DeRuyter in Africa, but mostly by the constantly increasing debts which the planters owed to the company. Notwithstanding these difficulties Secretary Leighton maintained that since the formation of the company Barbadoes

<sup>23</sup> C. O. 1: 21, f. 222, Willoughby to Williamson, September 17, 1667.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 209, petition of the representatives of Barbadoes to the king, September 5, 1667. This document and Willoughby's letter of September 17, 1667, also urge very strongly that the bars of the Navigation Acts be let down in order to permit servants to be imported from Scotland.



had been supplied more adequately with slaves than at any previous time. As for the planters' having refused to ship their goods on the company's ships, he declared that this was nothing more than they had consistently done since the formation of the company.<sup>25</sup>

In answer to the planters' representation of September 5, 1667, Sir Ellis Leighton admitted that if Barbadoes alone was being considered, a free trade to Guinea was preferable to any other, but since the trade of the whole nation had to be given first consideration the idea was pernicious. He asserted that the company was willing to furnish the planters with all the Negroes they desired at the rates already published, seventeen pounds per head, provided security was given for payment in money or sugar; that instead of a lack of Negroes in Barbadoes there had been so large a number left on the hands of the factors that many had died; and that if the planters were sincere in their complaints they would be willing to agree with the company on a definite number of slaves which they would take annually.<sup>26</sup>

Since the importance of the Royal Company was by this time definitely on the wane Sir Paul Painter succeeded in presenting his petition regarding affairs in Barbadoes to the House of Commons, in September, 1667. Although the Royal Company was ordered to produce its charter no further action was taken. The planters were by no means discouraged and again requested the Privy Council to con-

<sup>25</sup> The petition and these answers are printed in a pamphlet entitled, "Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading into Africa, to the Petition and Paper of certain Heads and Particulars thereunto relating exhibited to the Honourable House of Commons by Sir Paul Painter." As to the assertion that the planters refused to ship their products in the company's ships there seems to be no very good evidence on either side. Sometimes the company's vessels were sent home from Barbadoes empty. Upon such occasions the agents always said that there were no goods with which to load them.

<sup>26</sup> C. O. 1: 22, f. 42, answer of Sir Ellis Leighton, secretary of the Royal Adventurers, to the petition from Barbadoes of September 5, 1667; C. O. 1: 22, f. 43, proposal of the Royal Adventurers concerning the sale of Negroes in Barbadoes, 1 January, 1668.

sider the matter of granting a free trade to Guinea.<sup>27</sup> Later the people of Barbadoes once more represented to the king the inconceivable poverty caused by the lack of free trade to Guinea and other places.<sup>28</sup> Some of the Barbadoes assemblymen even suggested that all the merchants be excluded from the island, and that an act be passed forbidding any one to sue for a debt within four years.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, on May 12, 1669, in answer to the numerous complaints of Barbadoes, the Privy Council informed the islanders that the king would not infringe upon the charter granted to the African Company; and that sufficient Negroes would be furnished to the planters at reasonable prices providing the company was assured of payment.<sup>30</sup> The company was pleased at the king's favorable decision and at once represented to him its critical financial condition because the planters refused to pay their just debts.<sup>31</sup> The complaint of the company was considered in the Council September 28, 1669, at which time an order was issued requiring that henceforth land as well as chattel property in Barbadoes might be sold at public auction for the satisfaction of debts. The governor was directed to see that this order not only became a law in Barbadoes, but that after it had been passed it was to be executed.<sup>32</sup>

Thus it became clear that the planters of Barbadoes could hope for no relief from the king and, therefore, during the few remaining years in which the company was in existence they made no other consistent effort to convince the king of their point of view. On the other hand, if the company expected the king's instructions to be of great assistance it was sorely disappointed. On August 2, 1671,

<sup>27</sup> C. O. 1: 22, f. 204, address of the merchants and planters of Barbadoes now in London, read at the committee of trade, June 16, 1668.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, f. 69, address of the representative of Barbadoes to the king, August 3, 1668.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 42, account of affairs in Barbadoes by Lord Willoughby, July 22, 1668.

<sup>30</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 8: 294, May 12, 1669.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 402, August 27, 1669.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 424, September 28, 1669.



John Reid reported that they had been unable to recover the company's debts,<sup>33</sup> and further appeals to the king for relief were of no avail.<sup>34</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain whether Barbadoes was in as great need of slaves as the planters often asserted. The records kept by the factors in the island have nearly all disappeared. From an early ledger kept by the Barbadoes factors it appears that from August 11, 1663, to March 17, 1664, the usual time for the chief importation of the year, 3,075 Negroes were received by the company's factors. These slaves, 1,051 men, 1,018 women, 136 boys and 56 girls, were sold in return partly for sugar and partly for money. Estimating 2,400 pounds of sugar as equal to seventeen pounds it appears that the average price for these Negroes was a little over sixteen pounds per head.<sup>35</sup> This comparatively low price is to be accounted for by the fact that the women and children are averaged with the men, who sold for a higher price. These figures show therefore that the company's factors were selling adult slaves at about seventeen pounds each, as the company had publicly declared that it would do.

In 1667 the company asserted that it had furnished the plantations with about 6,000 slaves each year. This statement is to be doubted since the Anglo-Dutch war had practically disrupted the company's entire trade on the African coast. On the other hand, there is reason to think that the need for slaves in Barbadoes was not so pressing as might be inferred from the statements of the planters.<sup>36</sup> They naturally insisted on a large supply of slaves in order to keep the prices as low as possible. There seems no doubt, however, that the islanders were able to obtain more Negroes than they could pay for and were therefore hope-

<sup>33</sup> C. O. 1: 27, f. 24, John Reid to ?Arlington, August 2, 1671.

<sup>34</sup> A. C. R., 75: 106, 108, 109, September 11, November 10, 1671.

<sup>35</sup> These numbers and prices are gleaned from page three of the Barbadoes ledger. A. C. R., 646.

<sup>36</sup> Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter.



lessly in debt to the company. On July 9, 1668, Governor Willoughby estimated the total population of Barbadoes at 60,000, of which 40,000 were slaves.<sup>37</sup> Indeed some merchants declared that the slaves outnumbered the white men twenty to one.<sup>38</sup>

As compared to its trade with Barbadoes and Jamaica the company's trade in slaves to the Leeward Islands was insignificant. The company located at Nevis a factor who reported to the agents in Barbadoes<sup>39</sup> and also at Antigua where Governor Byam acted as agent.<sup>40</sup> After the war the company seems to have neglected the islands altogether. Upon one occasion the planters of Antigua pleaded unsuccessfully to have Negroes furnished to them on credit.<sup>41</sup> At another time they asserted that the company treated them much worse than it did the planters of Barbadoes because the latter were able to use their influence with the company to divert the supply of slaves to Barbadoes. Their condition, they declared, seemed all the more bitter when they considered the thriving trade in Negroes which the Dutch carried on from the island of Curaçao<sup>42</sup>

In Surinam, also there was a lack of slaves which was attributed to the prominent men of Barbadoes who were supposed to be influential with the Royal Company.<sup>43</sup> Later, during the Anglo-Dutch war, one of the company's ships in attempting to go to Surinam with Negroes, was captured by the Dutch.<sup>44</sup>

#### The history of the slave trade to Jamaica from 1660 to

<sup>37</sup> C. O. 29: 1, f. 116, Willoughby to the Lords of the Council, July 9, 1668.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 25, f. 62, memorial of some principal merchants trading to the plantations, 1670.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, f. 86, Modyford and Colleton to (the Royal Adventurers); C. O. 1: 20, f. 168, Michael Smith to Richard Chaundler, June 11, 1666.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, f. 89, Willoughby to Arlington, March 2, 1668.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 22, f. 53, proposals of the inhabitants of Antigua to Governor Willoughby, January 31, 1668.

<sup>42</sup> C. S. P., Col. 1669-1674, p. 204, William Byam to Willoughby, 1670; C. O. 1: 25, f. 138, Byam to Willoughby, n. d.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, f. 219, Renatus Enys to Bennet, November 1, 1663.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 29: 1, f. 116, Willoughby to the Lords of the Council, July 9, 1668.

1672 does not present the number of varied problems which arose during the same time in Barbadoes. Jamaica was as yet more sparsely settled than Barbadoes and therefore unable to take as large a number of Negroes. Nevertheless, even before 1660, there was a need for servants in Jamaica,<sup>45</sup> and there, as in Barbadoes, the Dutch had furnished the planters with Negroes. When a Dutch ship laden with 180 slaves appeared at the island in June, 1661, Colonel d'Oyley, the governor, who was desirous of making a personal profit out of the sales, was strongly in favor of permitting the vessel to land its Negroes. The Jamaica council, however, realized that the Navigation Act made the Negro trade with the Dutch illegal, and therefore it refused to accede to the governor's desire. This action so enraged the governor that on his own responsibility he purchased the whole cargo of slaves, some of which he sold to a Quaker in the island, while the others he disposed of at considerable profit to a Spaniard.<sup>46</sup> Again, in February, 1662, d'Oyley bought a number of Negroes from another Dutchman. When one of the king's ships attempted to seize the Dutch vessel for infringing the Navigation Act, the governor even contrived to get it safely away from the island.<sup>47</sup>

When Colonel Modyford became governor of Jamaica in 1664, he was instructed to do all that he possibly could to encourage the trade which the Royal Company was endeavoring to set on foot in the West Indies.<sup>48</sup> In the instructions mention was also made of Modyford's previous interest in managing the affairs of the Royal Company in Barbadoes, for which company, it was said, he undoubtedly retained great affection. Shortly thereafter he issued a

<sup>45</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1675-1676, Addenda, p. 125, Cornelius Burough to the Admiralty Commissioners, November 28, 1658.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 1661-1668, p. 36, narrative of the buying of a shipload of Negroes, June 14, 1661.

<sup>47</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 77, Captain Richard Whiting to the officers of his Majesty's navy, March 10, 1662; C. O. 1: 17, f. 236, petition of Colonel Godfrey Ashbey and others to the king, 1663.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, f. 58, instructions to Colonel Modyford, governor of Jamaica, February 18, 1664.



proclamation promising extensive freedom of commerce except in the Negro trade which was in the hands of the Royal Company.<sup>49</sup>

Although Modyford's proclamation indicated a continued interest in the company's trade, he gave his first consideration to the welfare of the colony. This appears from a list of the island's needs which he submitted to the king, May 10, 1664, in which he asked among other things that the Royal Company be obliged to furnish annually whatever Negroes were necessary, and that the poorer planters be accorded easy terms in paying for them. Furthermore he requested that indentured servants be sent from England and that the island might have freedom of trade except in Negroes.<sup>50</sup> His desires for a free trade were denied, but the Privy Council agreed to consult with the Royal Company and to recommend that it be obliged to furnish Jamaica with a sufficient supply of Negroes.<sup>51</sup>

There is no evidence that the Privy Council called the company's attention to Modyford's request, nor is there any indication that it endeavored to send very many Negroes to Jamaica. Modyford attended to a plantation which the company had bought in Jamaica<sup>52</sup> and he sold a few slaves to the Spaniards,<sup>53</sup> but all the company's affairs in the aggregate really amounted to little in that island. There was a continual call for a greater supply of Negroes than the company sent.<sup>54</sup> Two ledgers used by the factors show that 690 Negroes were sold in 1666 and in the following year, 170.<sup>55</sup> Although this number was inadequate to meet the colony's needs, it is doubtful whether the company sent any slaves to Jamaica after 1667.

<sup>49</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 81, declaration of Sir Thomas Modyford, March 2, 1664.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 135, Modyford to Bennet, May 10, 1664.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 208, report of the Privy Council on Jamaica affairs, August 10, 1664.

<sup>52</sup> A. C. R., 75: 89.

<sup>53</sup> Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, February 7, 1664/5.

<sup>54</sup> C. O. 1: 19, f. 31, Lynch to Bennet, February 12, 1665; *ibid.*, f. 189, John Style to (Bennet), July 24, 1665.

<sup>55</sup> A. C. R., 869, entries from January 1, 1665/6 to December 31, 1666; *ibid.*, 870: 62.



Under these circumstances Modyford lost interest in the company's affairs and therefore it resolved, April 6, 1669, to dispense with his services. Modyford had received a pension of three hundred pounds per year up to Michaelmas, 1666, but after that time the company's financial condition no longer warranted this expense. The company does not seem to have been displeased with Modyford because it requested that he use his good offices as governor to assist it in every possible way. At the same time the services of the other factor, Mr. Molesworth, were discontinued and he was requested to send an inventory of the company's affairs.<sup>56</sup>

Modyford thus free from his connection with the company probably represented the desires of the Jamaica people in a more unbiased manner. On September 20, 1670, he enumerated a number of needs of the island and asked Secretary Arlington that licenses to trade to Africa for Negroes be granted free of charge or at least at more moderate rates. For this privilege he declared that security could be given that the slaves would be carried only to Jamaica. The Royal Company itself could not complain when it realized how much this freedom of trade would mean toward the prosperity of Jamaica, and thus ultimately to the entire kingdom.<sup>57</sup> Modyford admitted that the Anglo-Dutch war had been a great hindrance to Jamaica's prosperity but that the lack of Negroes since 1665 had been a much greater obstruction.<sup>58</sup>

The more insistent demands which Governor Modyford made in 1670 for freedom of trade to Africa show that the company's failure to send Negroes to Jamaica after 1667 was beginning to be resented. Although there had been a constant demand for Negroes in Jamaica, there was up to 1670 less need for slaves there than in Barbadoes. At least

<sup>56</sup> A. C. R., 75: 14, 89.

<sup>57</sup> C. O. 1: 25, f. 127, Modyford to Arlington, (September 20, 1670).

<sup>58</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1669-1674, p. 107, additional propositions made to the Privy Council about Jamaica by Charles Modyford by order of Sir Thomas Modyford, (September 28, 1670).

the demands made by the planters of Jamaica were not so frequent and so insistent as they were in Barbadoes. To a certain extent the planters of Jamaica may have been deterred from representing the lack of labor supply while Governor Modyford was one of the company's factors. Modyford had been very much interested in the company's trade, especially with the Spanish colonies. As soon as it became clear, however, that the losses incurred in the Anglo-Dutch war, would make it impossible for the company to continue the slave trade to the West Indies, Modyford undoubtedly voiced a genuine demand on the part of the planters for more slaves. By the year 1670 the island was better developed than it had been ten years before and the need for slaves was beginning to be acute.<sup>59</sup>

About the first of March, 1662, two Spaniards made their appearance at Barbadoes to make overtures for a supply of slaves, which they intended to transport to Peru. The Spaniards asserted that if they received encouragement, they would come every fortnight with large supplies of bullion to pay for the slaves which they exported. Sir Thomas Modyford, the company's factor and the speaker of the Barbadoes assembly, was enthusiastic about this proposition and pointed out that the trade with the Spanish colonies would increase the king's revenue and at the same time would deprive the Dutch of a lucrative trade.<sup>60</sup> Since they were well treated on their first visit to Barbadoes the Spaniards returned in April, 1662, at which time they bought four hundred Negroes for whom they paid from 125 to 140 pieces of eight.<sup>61</sup> When the Spaniards came to export their Negroes, however, they found that Governor Willoughby had levied a duty of eleven pieces of eight on each Negro. The assembly under Modyford's leadership at once declared the imposition of such a tax illegal. This resolution was carried to the council where, against the opposition of the governor, it was also passed. Governor

<sup>59</sup> C. O. 1: 14, f. 56, proposal by Lord Marlborough, 1663.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, f. 28, Thomas Modyford† to his brother, March 30, 1662.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 29, Thomas Modyford† to his brother, April 30, 1662.



Willoughby, nevertheless, had the temerity to collect the tax on some of the Negroes then in port, and a little later when one of the ships of the Royal Adventurers sold its Negroes to the Spaniards, he again enforced the payment of the export tax.<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding the governor's actions, Modyford despatched one of his own ships with slaves to Cartagena where it arrived safely and was well treated by the Spaniards.<sup>63</sup> Modyford was now more than ever convinced of the possibilities of the trade with the Spanish colonies, but believing that it could not be conducted successfully by private individuals, he recommended that it be settled on the Royal Company.<sup>64</sup>

When the Royal Company learned that the trade in Negroes to the Spanish colonies offered many possibilities it was very much interested. A petition was immediately submitted to the king requesting that, if the Spaniards were allowed to come to Barbadoes for slaves, the whole trade be conferred on the Royal Company. The company declared that the planters in the colonies had no reason to object to this arrangement because they had not engaged in this trade, and moreover an opportunity was being offered to them to become members of the company.<sup>65</sup>

The Privy Council was favorable to the company's proposition, and on March 13, 1663, the king instructed Lord Willoughby to permit the Spaniards to trade at Barbadoes for slaves notwithstanding any letters of marque that had been issued against them, or any provisions of the Navigation Act. He declared that the Spaniards were to be allowed to import into Barbadoes only the products of their own colonies, and were not to be permitted to carry away the produce of the English colonies. The effect of this provision was that in addition to slaves the Spaniards

<sup>62</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 29, 30, Thomas Modyford? to his brother, May 26, 1662.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 32, Thomas Modyford? to his brother, September 3, 13, 1662.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 32, Thomas Modyford? to his brother, September 13, 1662.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 20, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, ?January, 1663.



might obtain any products imported into Barbadoes from England.<sup>66</sup> The king settled the question of duties on slaves by ordering that ten pieces of eight on each Negro should be paid by all persons who exported slaves from Barbadoes or Jamaica to the Spanish colonies, except the agents of the Royal Company. The company was to pay no export duties on Negroes especially when the Spaniards had made previous contracts for them in England.<sup>67</sup>

Probably on account of the export duty on slaves which Willoughby had levied in 1662, the Spaniards were not anxious to return to Barbadoes. The company's factors therefore sent one of their ships with slaves to Terra Firma in order to convince the Spaniards that their desire for a Negro trade was genuine. On this occasion Lord Willoughby and the council of the island exacted £320 in customs from the factors. When the company heard of this procedure it immediately asked the king to enforce the order allowing it to export Negroes free of duty.<sup>68</sup> Thereupon the king ordered Willoughby to make immediate restitution of the £320 and to give the company's factors as much encouragement as possible.<sup>69</sup> Willoughby finally obeyed in a sullen manner. On May 20, 1665, he declared that the company had finally monopolized the Spanish trade for Negroes and that, because the king refused to permit an export duty to be levied on them, there was no revenue from that source.<sup>70</sup> The king's concessions to the Royal Company were of little avail, however, because the Anglo-Dutch war

<sup>66</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 136, instructions to Lord Willoughby, June 16, 1663.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 227 (the king to the governors of Barbadoes and Jamaica), March 30, 1663. That there was some trouble in deciding just what provisions to make regarding the Spanish trade appears from several unsigned and undated letters to Willoughby with conflicting provisions, but they nearly all mention the exception made in favor of the Royal Company in the letter of March 13, 1663. C. O. 1: 17, f. 22; C. O. 1: 17, ff. 24, 25; C. O. 1: 17, ff. 26, 27; P. C. R., Charles II, 3: 336-338.

<sup>68</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 225, 226, petition of the Royal Adventurers to the king, November, 1663.

<sup>69</sup> Willoughby made a restitution of the £320 in March, 1664. C. O. 1: 18, f. 86, Modyford and Colleton to (the Royal Adventurers), March 31, 1664.

<sup>70</sup> C. O. 1: 19, f. 124, Willoughby to the king, May 20, 1665.

effectually stopped most of the company's trade in Negroes including that from Barbadoes to the Spanish colonies.

In considering the trade in slaves from Jamaica to the Spanish colonies it is well to keep in mind that this island lay far to the west of all other English possessions in the West Indies. It was located in the very midst of the Spanish possessions from which it had been wrested in 1655 by the expedition of Sir William Penn and Admiral Venables. The people of the island realized their isolation and occasionally attempted to break down the decrees of the Spanish government, which forbade its colonies to have any intercourse with foreigners. Although the English government began a somewhat similar policy with respect to its colonies in the Navigation Act of 1660, it was generally agreed that some exception should be made for the island of Jamaica in connection with the Spanish trade.

When Lord Windsor became governor of Jamaica in 1662 he was instructed to endeavor to secure a free commerce with the Spanish colonies. If the governors of the Spanish colonies refused to grant this trade voluntarily, Lord Windsor and the council of the island were given permission to compel the Spanish authorities to acquiesce by the use of force or any other means at their disposal.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly a letter embodying this request was written to the governors of Porto Rico and Santo Domingo, but unfavorable replies were received. In accordance with the king's instructions the Jamaica council determined to obtain a trade by force.<sup>72</sup> This was done by issuing letters of marque to privateers for the purpose of preying upon Spanish ships.<sup>73</sup>

In the following year, 1663, as has already been mentioned, Charles II commanded the governors of Barbadoes

<sup>71</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 112, additional instructions to Lord Windsor, governor of Jamaica, April 8, 1662.

<sup>72</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 106, minutes of the council of Jamaica, August 20, 1662.

<sup>73</sup> A full description of privateering by the English against the Spaniards from the year 1660 to 1670 may be found in an article by Miss Violet Barbour in the *American Historical Review*, XVI: 529-566.



and Jamaica to permit the Spaniards to buy goods and Negroes in their respective islands, and to refrain from charging duties on these Negroes in case they were reexported by the agents of the Royal Adventurers.<sup>74</sup> This was followed by a royal order of April 29, 1663, commanding the governor to stop all hostile measures against the Spaniards. Sir Charles Lyttleton, the deputy governor, replied that he hoped the attempt to begin a trade with the Spaniards would be successful, especially in Negroes, which the Spaniards could not obtain more easily than in Jamaica.<sup>75</sup>

When Sir Charles Modyford became governor of Jamaica in 1664, the king repeated his desire to promote trade and correspondence with the Spanish plantations. Indeed Modyford's previous success in selling Negroes to the Spaniards probably influenced his appointment to this office. As soon as Modyford reached Jamaica he wrote a letter to the governor of Santo Domingo informing him that the king had ordered a cessation of hostilities and desired a peaceful commerce with the Spanish colonies.<sup>76</sup> Modyford instructed the two commissioners by whom the letter was sent to emphasize the trade in Negroes and to induce the Spaniards, if possible, to negotiate with him in regard to this matter.<sup>77</sup> Again the answer of the governor of Santo Domingo was unfavorable. He pointed out that it was not within his power to order a commerce with Jamaica, but that this was the province of the government in Spain. The governor, moreover, complained that the people of Jamaica had acted in the same hostile manner toward the Spaniards since the Restoration as they had in Cromwell's time, and therefore his people were little inclined to begin a trade with Jamaica.

<sup>74</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 125 (the king to the governors of Barbadoes and Jamaica), March 13, 1663.

<sup>75</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 199, Sir Charles Lyttleton, deputy governor, to Bennet, October 15, 1663.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, f. 137, Modyford to the governor of Santo Domingo, April 30, 1664.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 139, Modyford's instructions to Colonel Cary and Captain Perrott, May 2, 1664.



The refusal of the Spanish governor to consider Modyford's proposition seemed all the more bitter since it was well known at that time that the Spaniards were obtaining many Negroes from the Dutch West India Company. The Genoese also had a contract with the Spaniards to deliver 24,500 Negroes in seven years, nearly all of whom they expected to obtain from the Dutch at that "cursed little barren island" of Curaçao, as Sir Thomas Lynch called it. Lynch also observed that if the Royal Company desired to participate in the Spanish trade it would either have to sell to the Genoese or drive the Dutch out of Africa, because he did not believe it was possible to call in the privateers without the assistance of several men-of-war.<sup>78</sup> Just how much weight should be attached to this opinion is doubtful since Lynch was probably so much interested in continuing privateering against the Spaniards that he cared little how much this would interfere with the company's attempt to develop the Negro trade.

Lynch's opinion was not shared by the king, who had heard that the privateers were continuing their hostilities against the Spaniards. He therefore informed Modyford that he could not adequately express his dissatisfaction at the daily complaints made by the Spaniards about the violence of ships said to belong to Jamaica. Modyford was strictly commanded to secure and punish any such offenders.<sup>79</sup> The governor issued a proclamation in accordance with the king's instructions,<sup>80</sup> and also notified the governor of Havana that offenders against Spanish commerce would hereafter be punished as pirates.<sup>81</sup>

After the Anglo-Dutch war began the company imported very few Negroes to Jamaica for the Spanish trade or for any other purpose. The king's stringent orders re-

<sup>78</sup> C. O. 1: 18, ff. 152, 153, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Lynch to Bennet, May 25, 1664.

<sup>79</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 215, the king to Modyford, June 15, 1664.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220, proclamation by Sir Thomas Modyford, governor of Jamaica, June 15, 1664.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228, minutes of the council of Jamaica, August 19-22, 1664.

garding privateers were gradually allowed to go unnoticed. Modyford again began to issue letters of marque, a procedure which naturally destroyed all possibility of commerce between the Spanish colonies and the Royal Company.

At the time the desultory trade in Negroes was being started with the Spaniards at Barbadoes, Richard White, of Spain, came to England as an agent for two Spaniards, Domingo Grillo and Ambrosio Lomoline.<sup>82</sup> These two men had been granted the *assiento* in Spain, that is, the privilege of furnishing the Spanish colonies with Negro slaves. In order to wrest some of this trade from the Dutch West India Company the Royal Company entered into a contract with White, in the year 1663, to furnish the Spanish *assientists* with 3,500 Negroes per year for a definite number of years. According to this contract the slaves were to be delivered to the vessels of the *assientists* in Barbadoes and Jamaica; one of the company's factors was to be placed on board such ships; and the necessary safe conducts were to be procured for their voyage to and from the port of Cadiz.<sup>83</sup> Sir Ellis Leighton, secretary of the Royal Adventurers, obtained permission for Grillo's agents to reside in Jamaica and Barbadoes.<sup>84</sup> Sir Martin Noell, one of the most important West Indian merchants, as well as a prominent member of the African Company, seems to have been intrusted with the collection of the money due on this contract.<sup>85</sup>

Not long after this agreement was made the possibility

<sup>82</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1663-1664, p. 168, Richard White to Captain Weld, June 11, 1663.

<sup>83</sup> As this contract cannot be discovered it is difficult to say just when it was made or what were its conditions. Georges Scelle in his book, *La Traité Nègrière aux Indes de Castille*, I: 524, gives the date of this contract as February 28, 1663, and says it was for 35,000 Negroes which were to be delivered at the rate of 5,000 per year. This may be true, but on the other hand the company distinctly declares in one place that the contract was for the annual delivery of 3,500 Negroes per year. C. O. 1: 19, ff. 7, 8, brief narrative of the trade and present condition of the Royal Adventurers, 1664/5.

<sup>84</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 189, memorial of Sir Ellis Leighton to the duke of York, 11663.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 244, 247; A. C. R., 75: 48.



of a war with the Dutch began to appear. The company considered ways by which Grillo might be induced to mitigate the contract.<sup>86</sup> Complications concerning the security to be given arose, and Grillo complained that the required number of Negroes was not being furnished to him. Under the circumstances this was almost impossible because the outbreak of the Anglo-Dutch war made it very difficult to obtain slaves. Nevertheless, on May 26, 1665, the company resolved to procure as many Negroes as possible to fill the contract, providing Grillo made prompt payments.<sup>87</sup>

As may be surmised no great number of slaves was exported from Barbadoes or Jamaica on this contract. Only one ship arrived at Barbadoes from Cadiz. It desired to secure one thousand slaves, but the company's factors could obtain only eight hundred. Lord Willoughby carefully reported that he had complied with his Majesty's command not to exact any export duty for these slaves.<sup>88</sup> In Jamaica only a small number of Negroes were sold on this contract to Spanish ships which came from Cartagena.<sup>89</sup> There may have been other instances of sales not recorded, but it is certain that the war interfered to such an extent that the number of Negroes sold to Grillo fell far short of what the contract called for. In order to keep the agreement intact the company resolved, March 23, 1666, to lay the situation before the king, and to ask him to permit Grillo's agents to buy sufficient Negroes in the plantations to make up the required number, and that no export duties be charged on them.<sup>90</sup> The king complied with the company's request, and the desired orders were sent to the governors of Jamaica and Barbadoes.<sup>91</sup> Some trouble had arisen in Jamaica, however, between Grillo's agents and Governor Modyford. Since the company believed that Grillo's

<sup>86</sup> A. C. R., 75: 15, August 5, 1664.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 34, May 26, 1665.

<sup>88</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 165, Willoughby to the king, June 17, 1664.

<sup>89</sup> Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, April 8, 1665.

<sup>90</sup> A. C. R., 75: 43, March 23, 1665/6.

<sup>91</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 396, March 30, 1666.



agents were primarily to blame for this, it resolved in the future to deliver Negroes only at Barbadoes in return for ready money.<sup>92</sup>

This was virtually the end of the contract. In 1667 the company spoke of the agreement as having been broken by the Grillos, and that it was under no further obligation to carry out its terms. Altogether, it declared, that no more than 1,200 Negroes had been delivered to Grillo's agents.<sup>93</sup> Thus this project, which the company at first asserted would bring into the English kingdom 86,000 pounds of Spanish silver per year,<sup>94</sup> ended in insignificant fashion.

Although the Grillo contract and the other attempts to begin a slave trade with the Spanish colonies had proved much less successful than the Company of Royal Adventurers had hoped, a great deal had been accomplished toward bringing to light the fundamental difficulties of this trade. In the first place, not much could be accomplished in the way of developing this trade so long as the Spanish government maintained its attitude of uncompromising hostility toward all foreigners notwithstanding the fact that the Spanish colonists would gladly have welcomed the slave traders. Furthermore, although the English government had signified its willingness to disregard the restrictions of the Navigation Acts in this instance, the hostile attitude assumed by the planters toward the trade in slaves to the Spanish colonies also had to be taken into consideration. Whenever the planters were able to do so they endeavored to prevent the exportation to the Spanish colonies of slaves which they maintained were very much needed on their own plantations.

This opposition to the trade in Negroes to the Spanish colonies was only one of the several ways in which the col-

<sup>92</sup> A. C. R., 75: 46; Add. MSS., 12,430, f. 31, Beeston, Journal, February 7, 1664/5.

<sup>93</sup> Answer of the Company of Royal Adventurers . . . to the Petition . . . exhibited . . . by Sir Paul Painter.

<sup>94</sup> C. O. 1: 19, ff. 7, 8, brief narrative of the trade and present condition of the Royal Adventurers, 1664/5.

onists manifested their hostility toward the mercantile element in general and the Company of Royal Adventurers in particular. Freedom of trade with all the world seemed very desirable to the planters, who regarded the restrictions of the Navigation Acts as gross favoritism and partiality to the rising mercantile class. The monopoly of supplying the colonies with slaves, conferred upon the Company of Royal Adventurers, was most cordially hated on account of the great degree of dependence placed upon slave labor in the plantations. As a result of this conflict of interests the planters early resorted to numerous devices such as the laws for the protection of debtors, to embarrass the company in the exercise of its monopoly. Since the company had received its exclusive privileges by a charter from the crown the English planters in the West Indies soon found that their trouble with the Company of Royal Adventurers brought them also into direct conflict with the king. In this way the planters enjoyed the distinction of being among the first to begin the opposition which later, in the Great Revolution, resulted in the overthrow of James II and the royal prerogative.

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In the Public Record Office the Foreign State Papers, particularly those for the United Provinces, were of great value in working out the Anglo-Dutch trouble on the African Coast. The records of the High Court of Admiralty are also valuable for that purpose. For the relations of the Company of Royal Adventurers to the planters in the West Indies the Colonial Papers are not extensive, but they are invaluable.

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