

uncertain of their way, and slept in monstrous pools and ponds among the sands of the coasts. It was a sinister place, swept by furious winds, beaten by obstinate rains, veiled in a perpetual fog, where nothing was heard but the roar of the sea, and the voices of wild beasts and the birds of the ocean."

How indomitable the energy, how unconquerable the zeal, which have transformed this almost uninhabitable region into a wealthy, prosperous and well-governed country! To accomplish this no one well-fought battle was sufficient. The conflict is perpetual. But so bravely and wisely has the warfare been waged against the three-fold enemy—lake, river and sea—that enormous lakes have been replaced by fertile fields and populous villages, rivers have been trained to do service to the nation, and the ocean itself, though rising to a higher level than the greater part of the land, has not alone been compelled to restrain its greed and yield to the command, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther;" but has been changed, as by a magician's wand, into a fortress, by means of which the intrepid Hollander has more than once bidden successful defiance to his foes.

Into the history of this marvellous victory over seemingly insurmountable obstacles, we may not enter. It is enough to say that hostile lakes have been redeemed by a system of drainage that reflects undying credit upon its promoters; that rivers, which were a constant menace to the safety of the villages and cities through which they passed, are channelled and defended at their mouths, bordered by powerful dykes, turned from their course, regulated, divided, or brought together, until compelled to minister where they had previously destroyed; that the advancing ocean is successfully resisted by dykes, which have been aptly likened to a fortress, in the shelter of which Holland lives "on a war-footing with the sea." As will be readily believed, "eternal vigilance is the price" of safety. It is never possible to "rest and be thankful," in the pleasing assurance that the enemy is overthrown. Holland maintains its physical existence by the exercise of the untiring energy and skill which redeemed its waste places, making them, in many instances, gardens of delight.

Nor is the political history of Holland less interesting or thrilling than its physical history. The story of its redemption from the pitiless grasp of river, lake and ocean, is typical of its conflict with the nations that have attempted its conquest. To employ the words of the graceful writer, from whom I have already quoted: