

compete with the Portuguese and Spaniards in India, was the unlucky move by which the latter closed Lisbon against the Dutch mercantile navy.

Seeing its usual store of supply cut off and its second-hand profit endangered Dutch commerce took the alarm and at

of the boldest and most clear sighted governors that ever served the Company's cause in the East Indies, proclaims Batavia the centre of the Dutch forces.

Holland had become one of the first powers in Europe; but the wonderful possessions of the Dutch East-India

struggle for self preservation which on many occasions might have been deemed entirely hopeless, if the opponents in Europe had been fully possessed of the facts which have since been brought to our knowledge. If, however, we may pass in silence the details of war between the



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Natives of Banda

once made efforts to meet its opponents on an equality.

In 1595 the first Dutch vessels are sent out under Corn. Houtman, to trace the unknown path to India, risking their poor ships round the Cape of Good Hope. Their enterprise is crowned with success. Corn v. Neck, Warwyk, and v. d. Hagen. follow. In 1599 Banda is visited by Jacob Heemskerck.

The Oost-Indische Compagnie famous for its rapid development and unprecedented display, commences its operations in Indian waters. Soon the love of monopoly excludes all others from the field of commerce. India like Europe is disturbed by war amongst the nations, trading in those days sword in hand and the guns loaded on board their merchant ships.

In the Moluccan Archipelago the foes of the Hollanders generally make common cause with the natives, who are shut out from the profitable trade of spices themselves. This constant struggle, however, does not disturb the company's sphere of influence, on the contrary it leads to a permanent form of administration, which reaches its highest pinnacle when Coen, one

Company in India are of a strictly private character, governed by officials controlled by the company only, and the State itself has not the slightest intention to join the distant isles to the Mother-country. Monopoly in the Moluccan Archipelago is all that is desired, and the company's officials know perfectly well how to safeguard its interest in this respect.

We need not enter into the company's

Dutch and other European nations, we may not wholly do so with regard to the struggle between the natives and the Dutch in India, which fills many an inglorious page in the history of those days.

As a rule writers of the present century have criticized the policy of the Oost Indische Compagnie in a most severe way, especially with regard to the hard measures carried out in the Banda Islands, and we shall certainly not defend any of these unscrupulous acts which were forced upon the Bandanese in order to maintain the monopoly of spices in Indian waters.

It is clear, however, that in judging of past times the critic has to bear in mind first of all that in the beginning of the 17th century the ideas about humanity in war were radically different from what they are now. Secondly, equity should allow for many an act of bloodshed provoked by the constant treachery of the Asiatic tribes, seemingly eager to grant any amount of privileges, solemnly pledged when they considered themselves compelled to submit, but as eagerly scouted, as soon as they thought the moment fit to do so, either on instigation or by instinct.



A Banda House