

HISTORY

OF

MARINE ARCHITECTURE.



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Political Account of the different Navies of Europe, from the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century to the Death of Queen Anne—Effect produced by the turbulent and ambitious Conduct of Louis the XIVth—State of the Genoese, Venetian, and Spanish Marine—The Naval Power of France—its Declension, and the Causes which produced it—the Losses it sustained during the War which commenced in the Year 1702—Custom of Building Ships of encreased Dimensions according to their Rate and Number of Guns, introduced by the French Builders—its Effect, particularly on the British Navy—insignificant State of the Spanish Marine at the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century—Particulars of its Diminution during the War—State of the Portugueze Navy—Account of the Dutch Marine—Causes of its Decline—Conduct of the Government itself instrumental to it—Growing State of the Russian Navy under the Auspices of Peter, surnamed the Great—its formidable Condition in 1714—Force of a Squadron collected at Revel in that Year—Defeat of the Swedes by Admiral Apraxin—Causes of the Declension of the Swedish Naval Force—Inconsiderable Figure made by its Navy, notwithstanding the acknowledged Abilities of its Seamen—of the Danish Navy, and the collateral Causes which tended to produce its apparent Inactivity—the Attention of the Sovereign applied to prevent its Decay or Diminution—Comparative View of the different Navies and of the Commercial State of Europe.

A PERSON living secluded from the world, and regarding the actions of mankind merely as a philosopher, might not improbably be induced to think, on being informed of the political state of Europe, and the general prospect of public affairs, as they separately stood at the commencement of the seventeenth and

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eighteenth centuries, that all those principles, by which the conduct of nations was regulated, had, through some extraordinary convulsion of nature, or other cause with which he was not acquainted, undergone a total and most mischievous change. At the first of those periods, owing to circumstances which it is not necessary to repeat again, a tranquillity, almost universal, appeared to overspread Europe; but, according to the ancient and trite proverb, this delusive calm was but the forerunner of that dreadful, and almost uninterrupted storm, which has not only laid the shores of Europe waste, but extended its horrors into the most distant, and totally unoffending quarters of the world, during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

A continuance of the same acting principle, which had lighted the torch of war, and brandished it when blazing in all its horrors, over so considerable a part of Europe, towards the conclusion of the seventeenth century, was productive of still more dreadful effects immediately after the commencement of the ensuing. The discordant and diabolically ambitious spirit of Louis the XIVth, nothing abating in its vigour, though the fuel which had at first fed its fury was consumed, eagerly spread itself in search of fresh materials which might continue to support its rage. The fatal industry with which this system was pursued, proved, most unfortunately for the rest of the world, too effectual. Independent of those countries which immediately surrounded the identical spot whence the flame arose, and which of course became the most immediate prey to its effects; its baneful influence was soon most sensibly felt even in remote districts, which its own immediate operations were incapable of reaching.

Spain, Portugal, Britain, Holland, Germany, and the northern parts of Italy, formed an immense volcano, of which France was the crater; while Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and, in fine, almost every country in Europe, influenced by the persuasion, terrified by the threats, or cajoled by the specious promises of Louis, were armed against each other, and joined in a scene so terrific, as almost to threaten an annihilation of the human race.—The Mediterranean States of Genoa and Venice alone derived tranquillity; the first, from its insignificance and total want of naval power; the latter, from its distance and secluded situation. A species of hereditary and habitual animosity, which appeared to exist between the latter Republic and the Turks, might be almost said to separate them from all the rest of the world, as naval combatants; they appeared to single each other out for contest; and the condition of their fleets, as well as the particular equipment of the ships composing them, seemed duly balanced against each other. The advantage, in point
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of skill, as well in the construction as the management of a ship, was evidently on the side of the Venetians ; but this pre-eminence was more than counterbalanced by the very superior numbers and force of the vessels which generally composed the Turkish fleets. This competition, together with that portion of trade which they still continued to retain with the Italian and other Mediterranean States, or Republics, whose territory bordered on the sea, served to preserve the existence of the Venetian marine, which had been so long on the decline ; but it were absurd to search for, or expect, improvement with regard to any science, in a country where the pursuit of it is in the wane. The alterations, therefore, which the example of those progressive improvements, made by other countries, gradually and slowly introduced into the Turkish and Venetian navies, have not sufficient consequence to render any description of them necessary.

Spain continued under the same paralysis which had, during the whole of the preceding century, deprived her of the power of action. Although nearly fifty years had passed away in uninterrupted quietude, that circumstance which served only to plunge her, if possible, into a still greater abyss of obscurity, would have enabled a less torpid nation than herself, possessing any internal resources, thought deserving that appellation, to erect itself into consequence.

France, Britain, and Holland, the three competitors for fame, for empire, for wealth, and for dominion, exerted separately every means of acquiring them, stretched to their utmost extent, which their situation afforded. The first of those countries, which had but very recently assumed to itself the character of a maritime power, had, by exertions, certainly unprecedented, and almost incredible, raised itself, within a very few years, into a situation capable of disputing the empire of the seas with its two rivals. Notwithstanding the severe losses which Louis had experienced during the preceding war, and that heavy blow he had in particular received, by the destruction of the best ships he possessed, off Cape la Hogue, so earnestly did he apply himself, during the short period of tranquillity which succeeded to the peace at Ryswic, in the re-establishment of that navy, the possession of which he appeared to think so essential to his glory, that at the commencement of the eighteenth century, he considered himself in a condition to disturb the peace of Europe as powerfully as ever. The event, however, proved he had been rather too hasty and sanguine in his expectation ; for, although the Dutch contributed, *pro formâ*, twenty ships of the line, as their *quota* of the fleet, consisting of fifty, sent on the expedition against Cadiz, he possessed not a naval force capable of facing the British singly. Continued perseverance, however, in the same

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measures created a fleet, collected at one point only, which consisted, in the year 1704, of fifty-two ships of the line * ; seventeen of which were three deckers. This

* *A List of the French Men of War that were in the Sea Engagement ; with the Names of their Commanders, and their respective Divisions.*

Vanguard, or the White and Blue Division.

Ships.	Captains.	Guns.	Men.
L'Esclatant	M. de Belle Fontaine	66	730
L'Eole	De Mons	62	380
Le S. Philippe, V. A.	M. D'Infreville	90	700
L'Heureux	Colbert St. Mar	70	450
Le Ruby	De Beneville	56	330
L'Arrogant	Derherbierf	62	350
Le Marquis	De Patonlét	60	350
Le Content	De St. Maure	70	450
Le Fier, Adm.	De Vilette	88	800
L'Intrepide	Du Casse	84	600
L'Excellent	De la Roche Alard	62	350
Le Sage	De Montbaut	54	330
L'Ecueil	D'Argint	62	380
Le Magnifique, C. A.	De Belleile	86	600
Le Monarque	Chabert	84	600
La Perle	Le Mothure	54	300
		1110	7700

Body of the Battle, or Center of the White Division.

Le Furieux	Le Comte de Blinacq	60	350
Le Vermandois	De Betusne	63	350
Le Lis	Le Chevalier de Villars	88	600
L'Etonnant, V. A.	De Coetlogan	90	700
L'Orgueilleux	Du Palois	88	600
L'Esperance	De Lagnion	50	330
Le Serieux	Champmelin	58	330
Le Fleuron	De Grancey	56	350
Le Vainqueur	Le Bailly de Lorraine	88	600
Le Foudroyant, Ad.	Le Comte de Toulouze	104	950
Le Terrible	De Relingue	104	900
	<i>Carried over</i>	849	6060

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This force was independent of those inferior squadrons necessarily stationed in other parts of Europe and the more distant quarters of the world : but Louis finding, from

Ships.	Captains.	Guns.	Men.
	<i>Brought over</i>	849	6060
L'Entreprenant - -	De Hautefort	60	350
La Fortune - -	De Baigneux	58	350
Le Parfait - -	Le M. de Chateaurand	74	470
Le Magnanime, C. A.	De Pointis	84	600
Le Sceptre - -	Le Comte de Bailly	88	600
Le Fendant - -	De la Luzerne	58	350
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		1271	8780
<i>Rear or Blue Division.</i>			
La Zelande - -	M. Ferville	60	350
Le St. Louis - -	De Beaujeu	60	380
L'Admirable, C. A. - -	De Cepeville	92	675
La Couronne - -	De Champigni	88	500
Le Cheval Marin - -	De Pontacque	44	260
Le Diamant - -	Dorogne	58	350
Le Gaillard - -	Du Mont	54	330
L'Invincible - -	Roverois	70	450
Le Soleil Royal, Ad.	De Langeron	102	850
L'Ardent - -	D'Aligre	66	400
Le Trident - -	De Modesne	56	350
Le Coureur - -	Phelipeaux	60	380
Le More - -	De St. Clair	52	330
Le Toulouze - -	Du Quesne Mon	60	380
Le Triumphant, V. A.	De la Harteloire	92	750
Le St. Esprit - -	Du Quesne Gui	72	490
L'Henri - -	Servigni	66	400
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		1152	7625
Frigates.			
L'Etoile - -	Gonson	30	190
L'Hercule - -	Rouvré	20	170
L'Andromede - -	Chamilli	8	85
La Diligence - -	Masmet	6	60
La Meduse - -	Roquemadere	28	150
L'Oiseau - -	Figuiera	36	180
La Galatee - -	Degorti	11	120
La Sibille - -	Guittasin	10	70
			L'Enflamme

from sad experience, that all the exertions he could possibly make were inadequate to the attainment of his so much wished-for purpose, was content, from this time, to confine himself entirely to a defensive system. His fleets no longer spread themselves over the face of the ocean, in pompous display of his pretended power, but were satisfied with remaining in security within their own ports; and the people, as well as their sovereign, were as much rejoiced at the slender, the transitory success of a desultory expedition, cautiously and secretly dispatched, as they could, or ought in reason to have been, with a victory which had preserved their country from ruin, or raised it to the highest pinnacle of glory.—Soon after the commencement of the war with England and Holland, the naval force of France consisted of 90 ships of the line, including those of fifty guns; with nearly 200 other vessels, many of which were frigates of considerable force. The injury sustained by the maritime power of France, in consequence of the victory off Malaga, was but trivial: the glory, indeed, that resulted from it was great; and the critical advantage derived by Britain, from so opportune a check, consequential in the extreme; but the diminution of the French navy, on that occasion, could scarcely have been felt by a country whose resources had not been stretched to the utmost. The loss of the French, to state it in its greatest possible extent, did not exceed, either in ships actually destroyed, or rendered unserviceable—one ship of three decks, *Le Fier*, of 88 guns; four of two decks; the *Excellent*, of 62; the *Fortune*, of 58; and the *Esperance*, of

			Captains.	Guns.	Men.
<i>L'Enflamme</i>	—	—	Canvet	6	40
<i>Le Dangereux</i>	—	—	Du Gay	6	50
<i>La Turquoise</i>	—	—	De Soutier	8	45
<i>Le Croissant</i>	—	—	Gabaret	12	50
<i>Le Bienvenu</i>	—	—	Rochambart	8	60
<i>L'Aigle volante</i>	—	—	Kervilly	6	35
<i>L'Ester</i>	—	—	Canvine	6	35
<i>Le Violent</i>	—	—	Renoix	10	45
<i>Le Lion</i>	—	—	Marquisat	8	50
Flutes.					
<i>Le Rotterdam</i>	—	—	Grand Maison	6	60
<i>Le Portefais</i>	—	—	Le Quesne	6	60

Besides the above-mentioned men of war, frigates, fire-ships and flutes, there were 12 French and 11 Spanish galleys; in all 92 sail.

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50 ; the Cheval Marin, of 44 guns* ; with a few galleys, the demolition of which was a mischief too inconsiderable to be taken into the account. It is true, that, not long afterwards, the marine of France sustained a second, and not less serious, disaster, in the capture or destruction of the Magnanime, of 84 guns ; the Lys, of the same force ; the Ardent of 66 ; the Arrogant, of 62 ; and the Marquis of 60 ; which were surprised, by Sir John Leake, off Gibraltar ; being the squadron forming the blockade of that fortress, under the orders of the Sieur de Pointis. But it is also certain, that at the time of the attack made on Toulon, in 1707, being three years after the Malaga fight, from whence historians date the downfall of the naval consequence of Louis the XIVth, there were then, in that port, 46 ships of the line †, besides 29 frigates, fire-ships, and vessels of smaller force or consequence.

The conclusion which naturally remains to be drawn from these facts is, either that the French King, grown wise by experience, saw too late the absurdity of his own chimerical projects, or that the means he possessed were incapable of supporting, any longer, a system raised on so weak and unstable a foundation. It is, perhaps, worth investigating to which of these causes the subsequent events are ascribable. At the time of the attack made on the port of Toulon, in 1707, by the army under the command of the Duke of Savoy, and the confederate fleet, led by Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel, it is somewhat remarkable, that there were in that harbour, as above stated, 46 French ships of the line, 16 of which were of three decks ‡ ; besides 29 frigates, and other vessels of inferior force ; and that the combined fleet of Britain and Holland, at least such part of it as was immediately engaged in the attack, amounted to no more than 43 ships of the line, of which six only were of three decks.

This circumstance very sufficiently proves, that the bubble, with which Louis the XIVth had for so long a time, and so expensively amused himself, in blowing to the largest size it was capable of attaining, had burst through the slender film which rendered it a visible object, and vanishing into air, was suddenly snatched from human sight, till an adoption of the same ridiculously ambitious principles, at some future period, should cause a repetition of the same childish,

* The latter not properly a ship of the line.

† No enterprize or expedition was ever undertaken by this formidable armament after the battle of Malaga, except a frivolous attempt, made by the Count De Tholoure, in 1706, to co-operate with Marshal Tesse, in the siege of Barcelona.

‡ Four of them mounting upwards of 100 guns each.

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though far from innocent experiment. Although it is natural to suppose that the inertness of the French fleet proceeded from its general condition being inadequate to a contest, even with an inferior enemy * ; yet several of the ships were nearly new off the stocks—one of them of 96 guns, which is erroneously called, in the official account †, *Le Triumphant*; the *Pompeux*, of 80; the *Neptune*, of 76; the *Bizarre*, of 70; the *Constant*, of 68; the *Temeraire*, of 60; and the *Meduse*, of 50.

The loss sustained by the besieged, amounting to eight ships of the line—the *Triumphant*, of 92 guns; the *Sceptre*, of 90; the *Vainqueur*, of 86; the *Neptune*, of 76; the *Invincible*, of 70; the *Serieux*, of 60; the *Laurier*, of 60; and the *Sage*, of 54; accelerated, and completed, the almost total retirement of the French fleet, from the busy and dangerous theatre of war, for 36 years. The Mediterranean no longer beheld, issuing from the port of Toulon, armaments, which were vainly expected to carry unlimited conquest before them, and give laws to the whole universe, without the ceremony or fatigue of a contest. Thirty-eight ships of the line, however, still remained to France; but the service effected by them was confined to little desultory expeditions, frequently unsuccessful; and when otherwise, unproductive of any solid advantage. So well satisfied was the British admiral of the supineness or debility of the foe with which he had to contend, that, after the termination of the expedition, and his consequent return to England, towards the close of the year, he left Sir Thomas Dilkes to command in the Mediterranean, with a squadron of no greater force than 13 ships of the line, none of which were larger than third rates; an armament ostensibly not equal to one-third of that which then remained undestroyed at Toulon.

During the years 1708, and the early part of the ensuing, no advantage was taken of this apparent superiority, notwithstanding little or no reinforcement was added to the British squadron. The only counterbalance to a multitude of losses sustained by the enemy, which it were irrelative to mention here, was the casual capture of the *Pembroke*, of 64 guns, and the *Faulcon*, of 32, by three French ships of the line; which, knowing the absence of an English force in any degree capable of contending with them, had, with considerable caution, ventured out of Toulon. Sir George Byng, who had arrived in the Mediterranean, and reconnoitered the

* The largest ship in the British fleet was the *Association*, of 96 guns. A very large proportion of the armament were even fourth-rates. *London Gazette*, No. 4357.

† A second ship, under the same name, carrying 92 guns, being one of the vessels destroyed by the fire of the assailants.

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harbour of Toulon, in the month of June preceding, found only eight ships of the line ready for sea, and one which was careening, all the rest being totally dismantled, or laid up, without any apparent intention of their being speedily brought forward into service. From this circumstance, as is properly remarked by historians, he naturally concluded the information he had received was true, that the French had no intention, or, to speak nearer the truth perhaps, were not able to fit out any fleet or force whatever, exceeding that already stated.

From this time France appears to have patiently adopted the resolution of permitting the combined powers to carry on whatever naval operations they thought proper in the Mediterranean, without making the smallest attempt to give them disturbance or interruption. Fleets of transports, laden with stores, or filled with troops, were perpetually passing between Italy and Spain, under very slender convoys, though the French force at Toulon far outnumbered that of its allied antagonists employed in the same quarter. The natural situation of the country renders, as it were, two distinct navies necessary both to its protection, and the annoyance of its foes in time of war. Louis adopted a different scheme of management for each: previous to the commencement of hostilities, he seems to have arranged his whole plan, and to have acted according to that arrangement, as far as circumstances permitted him, during the whole war. He resolved to keep the principal part of his naval force in the Mediterranean, imagining that his opponents would consequently find it necessary to detach thither the principal part of their navies; and, by that means, leave the Atlantic more open to his depredations. He had another reason, also, for this conduct; which in all probability, weighed no less forcibly with him than the former: the ships sent through the Streights, by the Confederated Powers, would be removed a considerable distance from their own harbours; and should they sustain any injury, either from tempests, or in action, their return to a friendly port, where they could procure assistance, might be difficult, if not impossible. The ships of England and Holland must pass at least a month from the time of their quitting Britain, ere they could come in contact with those of France; there was, consequently, the natural chance of contrary winds and tempests to be calculated on for their annoyance, while the fleet of Louis could lay quietly, and without incurring any such risk, till the very moment almost arrived, when an engagement should be deemed politically prudent. The plan was judiciously laid, but in great measure failed: this was owing, however, not to any defect in the plan itself, but the incompetency of the French navy to render it effective. The check, for

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it hardly deserved the name of a victory, off Malaga, gave so complete an ascendancy to the Confederates, that they scarcely appeared to consider, after that time, whether their enemy had any naval force in the same quarter or not.

The system adopted by the French King on the side of the Atlantic was much more successful. Instead of collecting the principal part of the naval force he possessed into one mass, he divided it into light squadrons, which were stationed at Dunkirk, at Brest, at Rochefort, and other ports, under the command of the most experienced officers in his service. He was admirably furnished in this respect—Jean Du Bart; the Count de St. Paul; the Chevalier de Forbin; and M. du Guay-Trouin progressively conducted the flying armaments employed in this desultory kind of war; and the deaths of the two first-mentioned Chefs D'Escadre, though very deservedly esteemed two of the ablest officers France had ever produced, appeared to create no confusion in the conduct of the war, their stations being so admirably well filled by those who were their successors. The policy of the conduct adopted by Louis, in respect to his marine arrangements on the northern and western coasts of France, was manifest, from the success which, in spite of very heavy and reiterated losses, attended them. At the very commencement of hostilities, the misfortune he sustained at Vigo nearly equalled all he experienced on the side of the Mediterranean, where he possessed a powerful fleet, during the whole of the war*; yet the destruction of so formidable a squadron, as that which had been under the Count de Chateau Renaud, seemed to produce no sensible inconvenience; while in the opposite quarter, all the naval genius and spirit of the French appeared in one instant overthrown; as though they considered their measures had been so deeply laid, that, failing of success on an occasion when they had exerted every nerve to procure it, little advantage was to be expected from any similar attempt fruitlessly repeated.

To counterbalance the ill-fortune in that quarter, the active spirit of Forbin and his coadjutor harassed, almost incredibly, the commerce of Britain; they captured the ships appointed to protect its fleets, and afterwards made themselves masters of no inconsiderable portion of those very fleets also. The Grafton and Hampton, of 70 guns each, were taken at one time, after a most resolute defence against Forbin, whose squadron consisted of ten ships of the line, a frigate, and four small vessels. Within an interval of less than six months, the united armaments under Forbin and Du Guai Trouin fell-in with a second Lisbon fleet, and,

* Including that occasioned by the victory off Malaga, which appeared to paralyze all the naval efforts of France in that quarter.

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