

outrageous treatment was begun at this time, but the worst of it was carried on after the reign of William had ended.

203. **The struggle with France**—Almost from his boyhood, William had been engaged in a struggle with his hereditary foe, Louis XIV, king of France. Indeed, it was largely with the hope of obtaining powerful aid in his fight with his old time enemy, that he had accepted the English throne. Louis, on his part, had long been trying to conquer Holland, and now, to have William not only oppose him successfully in Holland, but also to rule England to the loss of his friend James, was more than he could bear. War was declared in 1689, but for a time the English armies took little part in the fighting on the continent.

During the absence of William in Ireland, England was in a position of extreme danger. The French had been allowed to transport troops and supplies to Ireland almost without opposition; the landing of the six thousand French soldiers sent to the aid of James had not been opposed at all. Encouraged by this neglect, the French now gathered a large fleet under the Count of Tourville, with the object of destroying the English navy. In a battle off Beachy Head in 1690, the English and Dutch fleets, under Admiral Torrington, suffered a severe defeat, saved only from an overwhelming disaster by the obstinate courage of the Dutch. Tourville was master of the Channel; the descent of a French army was expected every moment. But Louis, although strongly urged by James, let the opportunity pass. Troops were hurriedly sent back from Ireland; levies were made in London and throughout the country; even the Jacobites themselves were prepared to resist the invasion of a foreign foe. By the time that William returned from Ireland, the peril of invasion was over, and England "had passed safely through one of the most dangerous crises in its national history."

Two years later, while William was on the continent, an elaborate plan was proposed for the invasion of England. Louis trusted that he had won over Admiral Russell, the commander of the English fleet, who was in strong sympathy with the exiled king. But the professional pride of