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Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 27: 1577-78 by John Lothrop Motley

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Title: The Rise of the Dutch Republic, 1577-78

Author: John Lothrop Motley

Release Date: January, 2004 [EBook #4829] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [This file was first posted on March 26, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 29

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1577-1578

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

CHAPTER IV.

Orange invited to visit Brussels—His correspondence upon the subject with the estates —general—Triumphant journey of the Prince to the capital——Stop put by him to the negotiations with Don John —New and stringent demands made upon the Governor—-His indignation —Open rupture—Intrigue of Netherland grandees with Archduke Matthias—Policy of Orange—Attitude of Queen Elizabeth—Flight of Matthias from Vienna—Anxiety of Elizabeth—Adroitness of the Prince—The office of Reward—-Election of Orange to that dignity— His complaints against the great nobles—Aerschot Governor of Flanders—A storm brewing in Ghent—Ryhove and Imbize—Blood-Councillor Hessels—Arrogance of the aristocratic party in Flanders —Ryhove's secret interview with Orange—Outbreak at Ghent—Arrest of Aerschot, Hessels, and others of the reactionary party—The Duke liberated at demand of Orange—The Prince's visit to

Ghent— Rhetorical demonstrations—The new Brussels Union characterized— Treaty with England—Articles by which Matthias is nominally constituted Governor-General—-His inauguration at Brussels— Brilliant and fantastic ceremonies—Letter of Don John to the Emperor—His anger with England—An army collecting—Arrival of Alexander Farnese—Injudicious distribution of offices in the States' army—The States' army fall back upon Gemblours, followed by Don John—Tremendous overthrow of the patriots—-Wonderful disparity in the respective losses of the two armies.

While these matters were in progress, an important movement was made by the estates-general. The Prince of Orange was formally and urgently invited to come to Brussels to aid them with his counsel and presence. The condemned traitor had not set foot in the capital for eleven years. We have narrated the circumstance of his departure, while the advancing trumpets of Alva's army were almost heard in

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the distance. His memorable and warning interview with Egmont has been described. Since that period, although his spirit had always been manifesting itself in the capital like an actual presence; although he had been the magnet towards which the states throughout all their, oscillations had involuntarily vibrated, yet he had been ever invisible. He had been summoned by the Blood Council to stand his trial, and had been condemned to death by default. He answered the summons by a defiance, and the condemnation by two campaigns, unsuccessful in appearance, but which had in reality prostrated the authority of the sovereign.

Since that period, the representative of royalty had sued the condemned traitor for forgiveness. The haughty brother of Philip had almost gone upon his knees, that the Prince might name his terms, and accept the proffered hand of majesty.

The Prince had refused, not from contumely, but from distrust. He had spurned the supplications, as he had defied the proscription of the King. There could be no friendship between the destroyer and the protector of a people. Had the Prince desired only the reversal of his death-sentence, and the infinite aggrandizement of his family, we have seen how completely he had held these issues in his power. Never had it been more easy, plausible, tempting, for a proscribed patriot to turn his back upon an almost sinking cause. We have seen how his brave and subtle Batavian prototype, Civilis, dealt with the representative of Roman despotism. The possible or impossible Netherland Republic of the first century of our era had been reluctantly abandoned, but the modern Civilis had justly more confidence in his people.

And now again the scene was changed. The son of the Emperor, the King's brother, was virtually beleaguered; the proscribed rebel had arrived at victory through a long series of defeats. The nation everywhere acknowledged him master, and was in undisguised revolt against the anointed sovereign. The great nobles, who hated Philip on the one hand, and the Reformed religion on the other, were obliged, in obedience to the dictates of a people with whom they had little sympathy, to accept the ascendency of the Calvinist Prince, of whom they were profoundly jealous. Even the fleeting and incapable Aerschot was obliged to simulate adhesion; even the brave Champagny, cordial hater of Spaniards, but most devotedly Catholic, "the chiefest man of wysedome and stomach at that tyme in Brussels," so envoy Wilson wrote to Burghley, had become "Brabantized," as his brother Granvelle expressed himself, and was one of the commissioners to invite the great rebel to Brussels. The other envoys were the Abbot of Saint Gertrude, Dr. Leoninus, and the Seigneur de Liesvelt. These gentlemen, on arriving at Gertruydenberg, presented a brief but very important memorial to the Prince. In that document they informed him that the states-general, knowing how efficacious would be his presence, by

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reason of his singular prudence, experience, and love for the welfare and repose of the country, had unanimously united in a supplication that he would incontinently transport himself to the city of Brussels, there to advise with them concerning the necessities of the land; but, as the principal calumny employed by their adversaries was that all the provinces and leading personages intended to change both sovereign and religion, at the instigation of his Excellency, it was desirable to disprove such fictions. They therefore very earnestly requested the Prince to make some contrary demonstration, by which it might be manifest to all that his Excellency, together with the estates of Holland and Zealand, intended faithfully to keep what they had promised. They prayed, therefore, that the Prince, permitting the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion in the places which had recently accepted his authority, would also allow its exercise in Holland and Zealand. They begged, further, that ho would promise by a new and authentic act, that the provinces of Holland and Zealand, would not suffer the said exercise to be impugned, or any new worship to be introduced, in the other provinces of the Netherlands.

This letter might almost be regarded as a trap, set by the Catholic nobles. Certainly the Ghent Pacification forbade the Reformed religion in form, and as certainly, winked at its exercise in fact. The proof was, that the new worship was spreading everywhere, that the exiles for conscience' sake were returning in swarms, and that the synod of the Reformed churches, lately held at Dort, had been, publicly attended by the ministers and deacons of numerous dissenting churches established in many different, places throughout all the provinces. The pressure of the edicts, the horror of the inquisition being removed, the down-trodden religion had sprung from the earth more freshly than ever.

The Prince was not likely to fall into the trap, if a trap had really been intended. He answered the envoys loyally, but with distinct reservations. He did not even accept the invitation, save on condition that his visit to Brussels should be expressly authorized by Holland and Zealand. Notwithstanding his desire once more to behold his dear country, and to enjoy the good company of his best friends and brothers, he felt it his duty to communicate beforehand with the states of those two provinces, between which, and himself there had been such close and reciprocal obligations, such long-tried and faithful affection. He therefore begged to refer the question to the assembly of the said provinces about to be held at Gouda, where, in point of fact, the permission for his journey was, not without considerable difficulty, a few days afterwards obtained.

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With regard to the more difficult requests addressed to him in the memorial, he professed generally his intention to execute the treaty of Ghent. He observed, however, that the point of permitting the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion in Holland and Zealand regarded principally the estates of these provinces, which had contracted for no innovation in this matter, at least till the assembling of the states -general. He therefore suggested that he neither could, nor ought to, permit any innovation, without the knowledge and consent of those estates. As to promising by authentic act, that neither he nor the two provinces would suffer the exercise of the Catholic religion to be in any wise impugned in the rest of the Netherlands, the Prince expressed himself content to promise that, according to the said Ghent Pacification, they would suffer no attempt to be made against the public repose or against the Catholic worship. He added that, as he had no intention of usurping any superiority over the states-general assembled at Brussels, he was content to leave the settlement of this point to their free-will and wisdom, engaging himself neither to offer nor permit any hindrance to their operations.

With this answer the deputies are said to have been well pleased. If they were so, it must be confessed that they were thankful for small favors. They had asked to have the Catholic religion introduced into Holland and Zealand. The Prince had simply referred them to the estates of these provinces. They had asked him to guarantee that the exercise of the Reformed religion should not be “procured” in the rest of the country. He had merely promised that the Catholic worship should not be prevented. The difference between the terms of the request and the reply was sufficiently wide.

The consent to his journey was with difficulty accorded by the estates of Holland and Zealand, and his wife, with many tears and anxious forebodings, beheld him depart for a capital where the heads of his brave and powerful friends had fallen, and where still lurked so many of his deadly foes. During his absence, prayers were offered daily for his safety in all the churches of Holland and Zealand, by command of the estates.

He arrived at Antwerp on the 17th of September, and was received with extraordinary enthusiasm. The Prince, who had gone forth alone, without even a bodyguard, had the whole population of the great city for his buckler. Here he spent five days, observing, with many a sigh, the melancholy changes which had taken place in the long interval of his absence. The recent traces of the horrible “Fury,” the blackened walls of the Hotel de Ville, the prostrate ruins of the marble streets, which he had known as the most imposing in Europe, could be hardly atoned for in his eyes even by the more grateful spectacle of the dismantled fortress.

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On the 23rd of September he was attended by a vast concourse of citizens to the new canal which led to Brussels, where three barges were in waiting for himself and suite. In one a banquet was spread; in the second, adorned with emblematic devices and draped with the banners of the seventeen provinces, he was to perform the brief journey; while the third had been filled by the inevitable rhetoric societies, with all the wonders of their dramatic and plastic ingenuity. Rarely had such a complication of vices and virtues, of crushed dragons, victorious archangels, broken fetters, and resurgent nationalities, been seen before, within the limits of a single canal boat. The affection was, however, sincere, and the spirit noble, even though the taste which presided at these remonstrations may have been somewhat pedantic.

The Prince was met several miles before the gates of Brussels by a procession of nearly half the inhabitants of the city, and thus escorted, he entered the capital in the afternoon of the 23rd of September. It was the proudest day of his life. The representatives of all the provinces, supported by the most undeniable fervor of the united Netherland people, greeted “Father William.” Perplexed, discordant, hating, fearing, doubting, they could believe nothing, respect nothing, love nothing, save the “tranquil” Prince. His presence at that moment in Brussels was the triumph of the people and of religious toleration. He meant to make use of the crisis to extend and to secure popular rights, and to establish the supremacy of the states-general under the nominal sovereignty of some Prince, who was yet to be selected, while the executive body was to be a state-council, appointed by the states-general. So far as appears, he had not decided as to the future protector, but he had resolved that it should be neither himself nor Philip of Spain. The outlaw came to Brussels prepared at last to trample out a sovereignty which had worked its own forfeiture. So far as he had made any election within his breast, his choice inclined to the miserable Duke of Anjou; a prince whom he never came to know as posterity has known him, but whom he at least learned to despise. Thus far the worthless and paltry intriguer still wore the heroic mask, deceiving even such far seeing politicians as Saint Aldegonde and the Prince.

William’s first act was to put a stop to the negotiations already on foot with Don John. He intended that they should lead to war, because peace was impossible, except a peace for which civil and religious liberty would be bartered, for it was idle, in his opinion, to expect the maintenance by the Spanish Governor of the Ghent Pacification, whatever promises might be extorted from his fears. A deputation, in the name of the states, had already been sent with fresh propositions to Don John, at Namur. The envoys were Caspar Schetz and the Bishop of Bruges. They had nearly come to an amicable convention with

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the Governor, the terms of which had been sent to the states-general for approval, at the very moment of the Prince's arrival in Brussels. Orange, with great promptness, prevented the ratification of these terms, which the estates had in reality already voted to accept. New articles were added to those which had originally been laid before Don John. It was now stipulated that the Ghent treaty and the Perpetual Edict should be maintained. The Governor was required forthwith to abandon Namur Castle, and to dismiss the German troops. He was to give up the other citadels and strong places, and to disband all the soldiers in his service. He was to command the governors of every province to prohibit the entrance of all foreign levies. He was forthwith to release captives, restore confiscated property, and reinstate officers who had been removed; leaving the details of such restorations to the council of Mechlin and the other provincial tribunals. He was to engage that the Count Van Buren should be set free within two months. He was himself, while waiting for the appointment of his successor, to take up his residence in Luxemburg, and while there, he was to be governed entirely by the decision of the State Council, expressed by a majority of its members. Furthermore, and as not the least stinging of these sharp requisitions, the Queen of England—she who had been the secret ally of Orange, and whose crown the Governor had secretly meant to appropriate—was to be included in the treaty.

It could hardly excite surprise that Don John, receiving these insolent propositions at the very moment in which he heard of the triumphant entrance into Brussels of the Prince, should be filled with rage and mortification. Never was champion of the Cross thus braved by infidels before. The Ghent treaty, according to the Orange interpretation, that is to say, heresy made legitimate, was to be the law of the land. His Majesty was to surrender—colors and cannon—to his revolted subjects. The royal authority was to be superseded by that of a State Council, appointed by the states-general, at the dictation of the Prince. The Governor-General himself, brother of his Catholic Majesty, was to sit quietly with folded arms in Luxemburg, while the arch-heretic and rebel reigned supreme in Brussels. It was too much to expect that the choleric soldier would be content with what he could not help regarding as a dishonorable capitulation. The arrangement seemed to him about as reasonable as it would have been to invite Sultan Selim to the Escorial, and to send Philip to reside at Bayonne. He could not but regard the whole proposition as an insolent declaration of war. He was right. It was a declaration of war; as much so as if proclaimed by trump of herald. How could Don John refuse the wager of battle thus haughtily proffered?

Smooth Schetz, Lord of Grobbendonck, and his episcopal colleague, in vain attempted to calm the Governor's wrath, which now flamed forth, in defiance of all considerations.

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They endeavored, without success, to palliate the presence of Orange, and the circumstances of his reception, for it was not probable that their eloquence would bring the Governor to look at the subject with their eyes. Three days were agreed upon for the suspension of hostilities, and Don John was highly indignant that the estates would grant no longer a truce. The refusal was, however, reasonable enough on their part, for they were aware that veteran Spaniards and Italians were constantly returning to him, and that he was daily strengthening his position. The envoys returned to Brussels, to give an account of the Governor's rage, which they could not declare to be unnatural, and to assist in preparations for the war, which was now deemed inevitable. Don John, leaving a strong garrison in the citadel of Namur, from which place he, despatched a final communication to the estates-general, dated the 2nd of October, retired to Luxemburg. In this letter, without exactly uttering defiance, he unequivocally accepted the hostilities which had been pressed upon him, and answered their hollow professions of attachment to the Catholic religion and his Majesty's authority, by denouncing their obvious intentions to trample upon both. He gave them, in short, to understand that he perceived their intentions, and meant them to comprehend his own.

Thus the quarrel was brought to an issue, and Don John saw with grim complacency, that the pen was at last to be superseded by the sword. A remarkable pamphlet was now published, in seven different languages, Latin, French, Flemish, German, Italian, Spanish; and English, containing a succinct account of the proceedings between the Governor and the estates, together with copies of the intercepted letters of Don John and Escovedo to the King, to Perez, to the German colonels, and to the Empress. This work, composed and published by order of the estates-general, was transmitted with an accompanying address to every potentate in Christendom. It was soon afterwards followed by a counter-statement, prepared by order of Don John, and containing his account of the same matters, with his recriminations against the conduct of the estates.

Another important movement had, meanwhile, been made by the third party in this complicated game. The Catholic nobles, jealous of the growing influence of Orange, and indignant at the expanding power of the people, had opened secret negotiations with the Archduke Matthias, then a mild, easy-tempered youth of twenty, brother of the reigning emperor, Rudolph. After the matter had been discussed some time in secret, it was resolved, towards the end of September, to send a messenger to Vienna, privately inviting the young Prince to Brussels, but much to the surprise of these nobles, it was discovered that some fifteen or sixteen of the grandees of the land, among them Aerschot, Havre, Champagny, De Ville, Lalain, De Heze, and others, had already taken .the initiative in the

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matter. On the 26th of August, the Seigneur de Maalsteede had set forth, by their appointment, for Vienna. There is no doubt that this step originated in jealousy felt towards Orange, but at the same time it is certain that several of the leaders in the enterprise were still his friends. Some, like Champagny, and De Heze, were honestly so; others, like Aerschot, Havrd, and De Ville, always traitors in heart to the national cause, loyal to nothing but their own advancement, were still apparently upon the best terms with him. Moreover, it is certain that he had been made aware of the scheme, at least, before the arrival of the Archduke in the Netherlands, for the Marquis Havre, on his way to England, as special envoy from the estates, had a conference with him at Gertruydenberg. This was in the middle of September, and before his departure for Brussels. Naturally, the proposition seemed, at first, anything but agreeable; but the Marquis represented himself afterwards as having at last induced the Prince to look upon it with more favorable eyes. Nevertheless, the step had been taken before the consultation was held; nor was it the first time that the advice, of Orange had been asked concerning the adoption of a measure after the measure had been adopted.

Whatever may have been his original sentiments upon the subject; however, he was always less apt to complain of irrevocable events than quick to reconcile them with his own combinations, and it was soon to be discovered that the new stumbling-block which his opponents had placed in his path, could be converted into an additional stepping-stone towards his goal. Meanwhile, the secret invitation to the Archduke was regarded by the people and by foreign spectators as a plot devised by his enemies. Davison, envoy from Queen Elizabeth, was then in Brussels, and informed his royal mistress, whose sentiments and sympathies were unequivocally in favor of Orange, of the intrigues against the Prince. The efforts of England were naturally to counteract the schemes of all who interfered with his policy, the Queen especially, with her customary sagacity, foreseeing the probable inclination of the Catholic nobles towards the protectorate of Alencon. She did not feel certain as to the precise plans of Orange, and there was no course better adapted to draw her from barren coquetry into positive engagements; than to arouse her jealousy of the French influence in the provinces. At this moment, she manifested the warmest friendship for the Prince.

Costly presents were transmitted by her to his wife; among others, an ornament, of which a sculptured lizard formed a part. The Princess, in a graceful letter to her husband, desiring that her acknowledgments should be presented to her English Majesty, accepted the present as significative. “Tis the fabled virtue of the lizard (she said) to awaken sleepers whom a serpent is about to sting. You are the lizard, and the Netherlands the sleepers,—pray

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Heaven they may escape the serpent's bite." The Prince was well aware, therefore, of the plots which were weaving against him. He had small faith in the great nobles, whom he trusted "as he would adders fanged," and relied only upon the communities, upon the mass of burghers. They deserved his confidence, and watched over his safety with jealous care. On one occasion, when he was engaged at the State Council till a late hour, the citizens conceived so much alarm, that a large number of them spontaneously armed themselves, and repaired to the palace. The Prince, informed of the circumstance, threw open a window and addressed them, thanking them for their friendship and assuring them of his safety. They were not satisfied, however, to leave him alone, but remained under arms below till the session was terminated, when they escorted him with affectionate respect to his own hotel.

The secret envoy arrived in Vienna, and excited the ambition of the youthful Matthias. It must be confessed that the offer could hardly be a very tempting one, and it excites our surprise that the Archduke should have thought the adventure worth the seeking. A most anomalous position in the Netherlands was offered to him by a slender and irresponsible faction of Netherlanders. There was a triple prospect before him: that of a hopeless intrigue against the first politician in Europe, a mortal combat with the most renowned conqueror of the age, a deadly feud with the most powerful and revengeful monarch in the world. Into this threefold enterprise he was about to plunge without any adequate resources, for the Archduke possessed no experience, power, or wealth. He brought, therefore, no strength to a cause which was itself feeble. He could hope for no protection, nor inspire any confidence. Nevertheless, he had courage, pliability, and a turn for political adventure. Visions of the discomfited Philip conferring the hand of his daughter, with the Netherlands as her dowry, upon the enterprising youth who, at this juncture, should succeed in overturning the Spanish authority in that country, were conjured up by those who originated the plot, and he was weak enough to consider such absurdities plausible, and to set forth at once to take possession of this castle in the air.

On the evening of October 3rd, 1577, he retired to rest at eight o'clock feigning extreme drowsiness. After waiting till his brother, Maximilian, who slept in another bed in the same chamber, was asleep, he slipped from his couch and from the room in his night apparel, without even putting on his slippers. He was soon after provided by the companions of his flight with the disguise of a servant, arrayed in which, with his face blackened, he made his escape by midnight from Vienna, but it is doubtful whether Rudolph were as ignorant as he affected to be of the scheme.

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[It was the opinion of Languet that the Emperor affected ignorance of the plot at its commencement, that he afterwards affected an original connivance, and that he was equally disingenuous in both pretences.]

The Archduke arrived at Cologne, attended only by two gentlemen and a few servants. The Governor was beside himself with fury; the Queen of England was indignant; the Prince only, against whom the measure was mainly directed, preserved his usual tranquillity.

Secretary Walsingham, as soon as the news reached England, sent for Meetkercke, colleague of Marquis Havre in the mission from the estates. He informed that functionary of the great perplexity and excitement which, according to information received from the English resident, Davison, were then prevailing in Brussels, on account of the approach of the Archduke. Some, he said, were for receiving him at one place, some at another; others were in favor of forbidding his entrance altogether. Things had been sufficiently complicated before, without this additional cause of confusion. Don John was strengthening himself daily, through the secret agency of the Duke of Guise and his party. His warlike genius was well known, as well as the experience of the soldiers who were fast rallying under his banner. On the other hand, the Duke of Alencon had come to La Fere, and was also raising troops, while to oppose this crowd of rival enemies, to deal with this host of impending disasters, there was but one man in the Netherlands. On the Prince of Orange alone could the distracted states rely. To his prudence and valor only could the Queen look with hopeful eyes. The Secretary proceeded to inform the envoy, therefore, that her Majesty would feel herself compelled to withdraw all succor from the states if the Prince of Orange were deprived of his leadership; for it was upon that leadership only that she had relied for obtaining a successful result. She was quite indisposed to encounter indefinite risk with an impossibility of profit.

Meetkercke replied to the Secretary by observing, that the great nobles of the land had been unanimous in desiring a new Governor-General at this juncture. They had thought Matthias, with a strong Council of State, composed of native Netherlanders, to control him, likely to prove a serviceable candidate for the post. They had reason to believe that, after he should be received, the Emperor would be reconciled to the measure, and that by his intercession the King of Spain would be likewise induced to acquiesce. He alluded, moreover, to the conference between the Marquis of Havre and Orange at Gertruydenberg, and quoted the opinion of the Prince that it would be unwise, after the invitation had been given, to insult the Archduke and his whole imperial house, by beating him with indignity upon his arrival. It was inevitable, said the envoy, that differences of opinion should exist in large assemblies, but according to information which he had recently received from Marquis Havre, then in Brussels, affairs had already become smooth again. At the conclusion of the conference, Walsingham repeated emphatically that the only condition upon which the Queen would continue her

succor to the Netherlands was, that the Prince should be forthwith appointed Lieutenant-General for the Archduke.

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The immediate result of this movement was, that Matthias was received at Antwerp by Orange at the head of two thousand cavalry, and attended by a vast concourse of inhabitants. Had the Prince chosen a contrary course, the Archduke might have been compelled to return, somewhat ridiculously, to Vienna; but, at the same time, the anger of the Emperor and of all Germany would have been aroused against Orange and the cause he served. Had the Prince, on the contrary, abandoned the field himself, and returned to Holland, he would have left the game in the hands of his adversaries. Ever since he had made what his brother John called that “dangerous gallows journey” to Brussels, his influence had been culminating daily, and the jealousy of the great nobles rising as rapidly. Had he now allowed himself to be driven from his post, he would have exactly fulfilled their object. By remaining, he counteracted their schemes.

By taking Matthias wholly into his own possession, he obtained one piece the more in the great game which he was playing against his antagonist in the Escorial. By making adroit use of events as they arose, he made the very waves which were to sink him, carry his great cause triumphantly onward.

The first result of the invitation to Matthias was the election of Orange as Ruward of Brabant. This office was one of great historical dignity, but somewhat anomalous in its functions. The province of Brabant, having no special governor, was usually considered under the immediate superintendence of the Governor-General. As the capital of Brabant was the residence of that functionary, no inconvenience from this course had been felt since the accession of the house of Burgundy. At present, however, the condition of affairs was so peculiar—the seat of government being empty without having been permanently vacated—that a special opportunity vas offered for conferring both honor and power on the Prince. A Ruward was not exactly dictator, although his authority was universal. He was not exactly protector, nor governor, nor stadholder. His functions were unlimited as to time—therefore superior to those of an ancient dictator; they were commonly conferred on the natural heir to the sovereignty—therefore more lofty than those of ordinary stadholders. The individuals who had previously held the office in the Netherlands had usually reigned afterwards in their own right. Duke Albert, of the Bavarian line; for example, had been Ruward of Hainault and Holland, for thirty years, during the insanity of his brother, and on the death of Duke William had succeeded to his title. Philip of Burgundy had declared himself Ruward of Brabant in 1425, and had shortly afterwards deprived Jacqueline of all her titles and appropriated them to himself. In the one case the regent, in the second case the usurper, had become reigning prince. Thus the movement of the jealous nobles against the Prince had for its first effect his immediate appointment to an office whose chief characteristic was, that it conducted to sovereignty.

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The election was accomplished thus. The “members,” or estates of Brussels, together with the deans, guilds, and other of the principal citizens of Antwerp, addressed a request to the states of Brabant, that William of Orange should be appointed Ruward, and after long deliberation the measure was carried. The unsolicited honor was then solemnly offered to him. He refused, and was only, after repeated and urgent entreaties, induced to accept the office. The matter was then referred to the states-general, who confirmed the dignity, after some demur, and with the condition that it might be superseded by the appointment of a governor-general. He was finally confirmed as Ruward on the 22d of October, to the boundless satisfaction of the people, who celebrated the event by a solemn holiday in Antwerp, Brussels, and other cities. His friends, inspired by the intrigues of his enemies, had thus elevated the Prince to almost unlimited power; while a strong expression in favor of his government had been elicited from the most important ally of the Netherlands-England. It soon rested with himself only to assume the government of Flanders, having been elected stadholder, not once only, but many times, by the four estates of that important province, and having as constantly refused the dignity. With Holland and Zealand devoted to him, Brabant and Flanders formally under his government, the Netherland capital lavishing testimonials of affection upon him, and the mass of the people almost worshipping him, it would not have been difficult for the Prince to play a game as selfish as it had hitherto been close and skilful. He might have proved to the grand seigniors that their suspicions were just, by assuming a crown which they had been intriguing to push from his brows. Certainly the nobles deserved their defeat. They had done their best to circumvent Orange, in all ways and at all times. They had paid their court to power when it was most powerful, and had sought to swim on the popular tide when it was rising. He avenged himself upon their perfidy only by serving his country more faithfully than ever, but it was natural that he should be indignant at the conduct of these gentlemen, “children of good houses,” (in his own words,) “issue of worthy, sires,” whose fathers, at least, he had ever loved and honored.

“They serve the Duke of Alva and the Grand Commander like varlets,” he cried; “they make war upon me to the knife. Afterwards they treat with me, they reconcile themselves with me, they are sworn foes of the Spaniard. Don John arrives, and they follow him; they intrigue for my ruin. Don John fails in his enterprise upon Antwerp citadel; they quit him incontinently and call upon me. No sooner do I come than, against their oath and without previous communication with the states or myself, they call upon the Archduke Matthias. Are the waves of the sea more inconstant—is Euripus more uncertain than the counsels of such men?”

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While these events were occurring at Brussels and Antwerp, a scene of a different nature was enacting at Ghent. The Duke of Aerschot had recently been appointed to the government of Flanders by the State Council, but the choice was exceedingly distasteful to a large number of the inhabitants. Although, since the defeat of Don John's party in Antwerp, Aerschot had again become "the affectionate brother" of Orange, yet he was known to be the head of the cabal which had brought Matthias from Vienna. Flanders, moreover, swarmed with converts to the Reformed religion, and the Duke's strict Romanism was well known. The people, therefore, who hated the Pope and adored the Prince, were furious at the appointment of the new governor, but by dint of profuse promises regarding the instant restoration of privileges and charters which had long lain dormant, the friends of Aerschot succeeded in preparing the way for his installation.

On the 20th of October, attended by twenty-three companies of infantry and three hundred horse, he came to Ghent. That famous place was still one of the most powerful and turbulent towns in Europe. Although diminished in importance since the commercial decline which had been the inevitable result of Philip's bloody government, it, was still swarming with a vigorous and dangerous population and it had not forgotten the days when the iron tongue of Roland could call eighty thousand fighting men to the city banner. Even now, twenty thousand were secretly pledged to rise at the bidding of certain chieftains resident among them; noble by birth, warmly attached to the Reformed religion, and devoted to Orange. These gentlemen were perfectly conscious that a reaction was to be attempted in favor of Don John and of Catholicism, through the agency of the newly-appointed governor of Flanders. Aerschot was trusted or respected by neither party. The only difference in the estimates formed of him was, that some considered him a deep and dangerous traitor; others that he was rather foolish than malicious, and more likely to ruin a good cause than to advance the interests of a bad one. The leaders of the popular party at Ghent believed him dangerous. They felt certain that it was the deeply laid design of the Catholic nobles foiled as they had been in the objects with which they had brought Matthias from Vienna, and enraged as they were that the only result of that movement had been to establish the power of Orange upon a firmer basis—to set up an opposing influence in Ghent. Flanders, in the possession of the Catholics, was to weigh up Brabant, with its recent tendencies to toleration. Aerschot was to counteract the schemes of Orange. Matthias was to be withdrawn from the influence of the great heretic, and be yet compelled to play the part set down for him by those who had placed him upon the stage. A large portion, no doubt, of the schemes here suggested, was in agitation, but the actors were hardly equal to the drama which they were attempting. The intrigue was, however, to be frustrated at once by the hand of Orange, acting as it often did from beneath a cloud.

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Of all the chieftains possessing influence with the inhabitants of Ghent, two young nobles, named Ryhove and Imbize, were the most conspicuous. Both were of ancient descent and broken fortunes, both were passionately attached to the Prince, both were inspired with an intense hatred for all that was Catholic or Spanish. They had travelled further on the reforming path than many had done in that day, and might even be called democratic in their notions. Their heads were filled with visions of Greece and Rome; the praise of republics was ever on their lips; and they avowed to their intimate associates that it was already feasible to compose a commonwealth like that of the Swiss Cantons out of the seventeen Netherlands. They were regarded as dreamers by some, as desperadoes by others. Few had confidence in their capacity or their purity; but Orange, who knew mankind, recognized in them useful instruments for any hazardous enterprise. They delighted in stratagems and sudden feats of arms. Audacious and cruel by temperament, they were ever most happy in becoming a portion of the desolation which popular tumults engender.

There were several excited meetings of the four estates of Flanders immediately after the arrival of the Duke of Aerschot in Ghent. His coming had been preceded by extensive promises, but it soon became obvious that their fulfilment was to be indefinitely deferred. There was a stormy session on the 27th of October, many of the clergy and nobility being present, and comparatively few members of the third estate. Very violent speeches were made, and threats openly uttered, that the privileges, about which so much noise had been heard, would be rather curtailed than enlarged under the new administration. At the same session, the commission of Aerschot was formally presented by Champagny and Sweveghem, deputed by the State Council for that purpose. Champagny was in a somewhat anomalous position. There was much doubt in men’s minds concerning him. He had seemed lately the friend of Orange, but he was certainly the brother of Granvelle. His splendid but fruitless services during the Antwerp Fury had not been forgotten, but he was known to be a determined Catholic. He was a hater of Spaniards, but no lover of popular liberty. The nature of his sentiments towards Orange was perhaps unjustly suspected. At any rate, two or three days after the events which now occupy our attention, he wrote him a private letter, in which he assured him of his attachment. In reference to the complaints, of the Prince, that he had not been seconded as he ought to have been, he said, moreover, that he could solemnly swear never to have seen a single individual who did not hold the Prince in admiration, and who was not affectionately devoted to him, not only, by public profession, but by private sentiment.

There was little doubt entertained as to the opinions held by the rest of the aristocratic party, then commencing their manoeuvres in Ghent. Their sentiments were uttered with sufficient distinctness in this remarkable session.

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Hessels, the old Blood Councillor, was then resident in Ghent; where he discharged high governmental functions. It was he, as it will be remembered, who habitually fell asleep at that horrible council board, and could only start from his naps to-shout “ad patibulum,” while the other murderers had found their work less narcotic. A letter from Hessels to Count de Reux, late royal governor of Flanders, was at the present juncture intercepted. Perhaps it was invented, but genuine or fictitious, it was circulated extensively among the popular leaders, and had the effect of proving Madame de Hessels a true prophet. It precipitated the revolution in Flanders, and soon afterwards cost the Councillor his life. “We have already brought many notable magistrates of Flanders over to the aide of his Highness Don John,” wrote Hessels. “We hope, after the Duke of Aerschot is governor; that we shall fully carry out the intentions of his Majesty and the plans of his Highness. We shall also know how to circumvent the scandalous heretic with all his adherents and followers.”

Certainly, if this letter were true, it was high time for the friends of the “scandalous heretic” to look about them. If it were a forgery, which is highly probable, it was ingeniously imagined, and did the work of truth. The revolutionary party, being in a small minority in the assembly, were advised by their leaders to bow before the storm. They did so, and the bluster of the reactionary party grew louder as they marked the apparent discomfiture of their foes. They openly asserted that the men who were clamoring for privileges should obtain nothing but halters. The buried charters should never be resuscitated; but the spirit of the dead Emperor, who had once put a rope around the necks of the insolent Ghenters, still lived in that of his son. There was no lack of denunciation. Don John and the Duke of Aerschot would soon bring the turbulent burghers to their senses, and there would then be an end to this renewed clamor about musty parchments. Much indignation was secretly excited in the assembly by such menaces. Without doors the subterranean flames spread rapidly, but no tumult occurred that night. Before the session was over, Ryhove left the city, pretending a visit to Tournay. No sooner had he left the gates, however, than he turned his horse’s head in the opposite direction, and rode off post haste to Antwerp. There he had a conference with William of Orange, and painted in lively colors the alarming position of affairs. “And what do you mean to do in the matter?” asked the Prince, rather drily. Ryhove was somewhat disconcerted. He had expected a violent explosion; well as he knew the tranquil personage whom he was addressing. “I know no better counsel,” he replied, at length, “than to take the Duke, with his bishops, councillors, lords, and the whole nest of them, by the throat, and thrust them all out together.”

“Rather a desperate undertaking, however?” said the Prince; carelessly, but interrogatively.

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“I know no other remedy,” answered Ryhove; “I would rather make the attempt, relying upon God alone, and die like a man if needful, than live in eternal slavery. Like an ancient Roman,” continued the young republican noble, in somewhat bombastic vein, “I am ready to wager my life, where my fatherland’s welfare is at stake.”

“Bold words!” said the Prince, looking gravely at Ryhove; “but upon what force do you rely for your undertaking?”

“If I can obtain no assistance from your Excellency,” was the reply, “I shall throw myself on the mass of the citizens. I can arouse them in the name of their ancient liberties, which must be redeemed now or never.”

The Prince, believing probably that the scheme, if scheme there were, was but a wild one, felt little inclination to compromise himself with the young conspirator. He told him he could do nothing at present, and saying that he must at least sleep upon the matter, dismissed him for the night. Next morning, at daybreak, Ryhove was again closeted with him. The Prince asked his sanguine partisan if he were still determined to carry out his project, with no more definite support than he had indicated? Ryhove assured him, in reply, that he meant to do so; or to die in the attempt. The Prince shrugged his shoulders, and soon afterwards seemed to fall into a reverie. Ryhove continued talking, but it was soon obvious that his Highness was not listening; and he therefore took his leave somewhat abruptly. Hardly had he left the house, however, when the Prince despatched Saint Aldegonde in search of him. That gentleman, proceeding to his hotel, walked straight into the apartment of Ryhove, and commenced a conversation with a person whom he found there, but to his surprise he soon discovered, experienced politician though he was, that he had made an egregious blunder. He had opened a dangerous secret to an entire stranger, and Ryhove coming into the apartment a few minutes afterwards, was naturally surprised to find the Prince’s chief councillor in close conversation about the plot with Van Rooyen, the burgomaster of Denremonde. The Flemish noble, however, always prompt in emergencies, drew his rapier, and assured the astonished burgomaster that he would either have his life on the instant, or his oath never to reveal a syllable of what he had heard. That functionary, who had neither desired the young noble’s confidence, nor contemplated the honor of being run through the body as a consequence of receiving it, was somewhat aghast at the rapid manner in which these gentlemen transacted business. He willingly gave the required pledge, and was permitted to depart.

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The effect of the conference between Saint Aldegonde and Ryhove was to convince the young partisan that the Prince would neither openly countenance his project, nor be extremely vexed should it prove successful. In short, while, as in the case of the arrest of the State Council, the subordinates were left to appear the principals in the transactions, the persons most intimate with William of Orange were allowed to form satisfactory opinions as to his wishes, and to serve as instruments to his ends. “Vive qui vince!” cried Saint-Aldegonde, encouragingly, to Ryhove, shaking hands with him at parting. The conspirator immediately mounted, and rode off towards Ghent. During his absence there had been much turbulence, but no decided outbreak, in that city. Imbize had accosted the Duke of Aerschot in the street, and demanded when and how he intended to proclaim the restoration of the ancient charters. The haughty Duke had endeavoured to shake off his importunate questioner, while Imbize persisted, with increasing audacity, till Aerschot lost his temper at last: “Charters, charters!” he cried in a rage; “you shall learn soon, ye that are thus howling for charters, that we have still the old means of making you dumb, with a rope on your throats. I tell you this—were you ever so much hounded on by the Prince of Orange.”

The violence of the new governor excited the wrath of Imbize. He broke from him abruptly, and rushed to a rendezvous of his confederates, every man of whom was ready for a desperate venture. Groups of excited people were seen vociferating in different places. A drum was heard to rattle from time to time. Nevertheless, the rising tumult seemed to subside again after a season, owing partly to the exertions of the magistrates, partly to the absence of Ryhove. At four in the afternoon that gentleman entered the town, and riding directly to the head-quarters of the conspiracy, was incensed to hear that the work, which had begun so bravely, had been allowed to cool. “Tis a time,” he cried, “for vigilance. If we sleep now, we shall be dead in our beds before morning. Better to fan the fire which has begun to blaze in the people’s heart. Better to gather the fruit while it is ripe. Let us go forward, each with his followers, and I pledge myself to lead the way. Let us scuttle the old ship of slavery; let us hunt the Spanish Inquisition, once for all, to the hell from whence it came!”

“There spoke the voice of a man!” cried the Flemish captain, Mieghem, one of the chief conspirators; “lead on, Ryhove, I swear to follow you as far as our legs will carry us.” Thus encouraged, Ryhove, rushed about the city, calling upon the people everywhere to rise. They rose almost to a man. Arming and mustering at different points, according to previous arrangements, a vast number assembled by toll of bell, after nightfall, on the public square, whence, under command of Ryhove, they swept to the

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residence of Aerschot at Saint Bavon. The guards, seeing the fierce mob approaching, brandishing spears and waving, torches, had scarce time to close the gates; as the people loudly demanded entrance and the delivery to them of the Governor. Both claims were refused. “Let us burn the birds in their nests,” cried Ryhove, without hesitation. Pitch, light wood, and other combustibles, were brought at his command, and in a few moments the palace would have been in flames, had not Aerschot, seeing that the insurgents were in earnest, capitulated. As soon as the gates were open, the foremost of the mob rushed upon him, and would have torn him limb from limb, had not Ryhove resolutely interfered, and twice protected the life of the governor, at the peril of his own. The Duke was then made a prisoner, and, under a strong guard, was conveyed, still in his night-gown, and bare-footed, to the mansion of Ryhove. All the other leading members of the Catholic party were captured, the arrests proceeding till a late hour in the night. Rassinghem, Sweveghem, Fisch, De la Porta, and other prominent members of the Flemish estates or council, were secured, but Champagny was allowed to make his escape. The Bishops of Bruges and Ypres were less fortunate. Blood-councillor Hessels, whose letter—genuine or counterfeited—had been so instrumental in hastening this outbreak, was most carefully guarded, and to him and to Senator Fisch the personal consequences of that night’s work were to be very tragic.

Thus audaciously, successfully, and hitherto without bloodshed, was the anti-Catholic revolution commenced in Flanders. The event was the first of a long and most signal series. The deed was done. The provisional government was established, at the head of which was placed Ryhove, to whom oaths of allegiance were rendered, subject to the future arrangements of the states-general and Orange: On the 9th of November, the nobles, notables, and community of Ghent published an address, in which they elaborately defended the revolution which had been effected and the arrests which had taken place; while the Catholic party, with Aerschot at its head, was declared to be secretly in league with Don John to bring back the Spanish troops, to overthrow the Prince of Orange, to deprive him of the protectorate of Brabant, to set at nought the Ghent treaty, and to suppress the Reformed religion.

The effect of this sudden rising of the popular party was prodigious throughout the Netherlands. At the same time, the audacity of such extreme proceedings could hardly be countenanced by any considerable party in the states-general. Champagny wrote to the Prince of Orange that, even if the letter of Hessels were genuine, it proved nothing against Aerschot, and he urged the necessity of suppressing such scene of licence immediately, through the influence of those who could command the passions of the mob. Otherwise, he affirmed that all legitimate forms of justice would

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disappear, and that it would be easy to set the bloodhounds upon any game whatever. Saint Aldegonde wrote to the Prince, that it would be a great point, but a very difficult one, to justify the Ghent transaction; for there was little doubt that the Hessels letter was a forgery. It was therefore as well, no doubt, that the Prince had not decidedly committed himself to Ryhove's plot; and thus deprived himself of the right to interfere afterwards, according to what seemed the claims of justice and sound policy.

He now sent Arend Van Dorp to Ghent, to remonstrate with the leaders of the insurrection upon the violence of their measures, and to demand the liberation of the prisoners—a request which was only complied with in the case of Aerschot. That nobleman was liberated on the 14th of November, under the condition that he would solemnly pledge himself to forget and forgive the treatment which he had received, but the other prisoners were retained in custody for a much longer period. A few weeks afterwards, the Prince of Orange visited Ghent, at the earnest request of the four estates of Flanders, and it was hoped that his presence would contribute to the restoration of tranquillity.

This visit was naturally honored by a brilliant display of "rhetorical" spectacles and tableaux vivants; for nothing could exceed the passion of the Netherlanders of that century for apologues and charades. In allegory they found an ever-present comforter in their deepest afflictions. The prince was escorted from the Town-gate to the Jacob's church amid a blaze of tar-barrels and torches, although it was mid-day, where a splendid exhibition had been arranged by that sovereign guild of rhetoric, "Jesus with the Balsam Flower." The drama was called Judas Maccabaeus, in compliment to the Prince. In the centre of the stage stood the Hebrew patriot, in full armor, symbolizing the illustrious guest doing battle for his country. He was attended by the three estates of the country, ingeniously personified by a single individual, who wore the velvet bonnet of a noble, the cassock of a priest, end the breeches of a burgher. Groups of allegorical personages were drawn up on the right and left;—Courage, Patriotism, Freedom, Mercy, Diligence, and other estimable qualities upon one side, were balanced by Murder, Rapine, Treason, and the rest of the sisterhood of Crime on the other. The Inquisition was represented as a lean and hungry hag. The "Ghent Pacification" was dressed in cramoisy satin, and wore a city on her head for a turban; while; tied to her apron-strings were Catholicism and Protestantism, bound in a loving embrace by a chain of seventeen links, which she was forging upon an anvil. Under the anvil was an individual in complete harness, engaged in eating his heart; this was Discord. In front of the scene stood History and Rhetoric, attired as "triumphant maidens, in white garments," each with a laurel crown and a burning torch. These personages, after holding a rhymed dialogue between themselves, filled with wonderful conceits and quibbles, addressed the Prince of Orange and Maccabaeus, one after the other, in a great quantity of very detestable verses.

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After much changing of scenes and groups, and an enormous quantity of Flemish-woven poetry, the “Ghent Peace” came forward, leading a lion in one hand, and holding a heart of pure gold in the other. The heart, upon which was inscribed Sinceritas, was then presented to the real Prince, as he sat “reposing after the spectacle,” and perhaps slightly yawning, the gift being accompanied by another tremendous discharge of complimentary verses. After this, William of Orange was permitted to proceed towards the lodgings provided for him, but the magistrates and notables met him upon the threshold, and the pensionary made him a long oration. Even after the Prince was fairly housed, he had not escaped the fangs of allegory; for, while he sat at supper refreshing his exhausted frame after so much personification and metaphor, a symbolical personage, attired to represent the town corporation made his appearance, and poured upon him a long and particularly dull heroic poem. Fortunately, this episode closed the labors of the day.

On the 7th of December, 1577, the states-general formally declared that Don John was no longer Stadholder, Governor, nor Captain-General, but an infractor of the peace which he had sworn to maintain, and an enemy of the fatherland. All natives of the country who should show him favor or assistance were declared rebels and traitors; and by a separate edict, issued the same day, it was ordained that an inventory of the estates of such persons should forthwith be taken.

Thus the war, which had for a brief period been suspended during the angry, tortuous, and hopeless negotiations which succeeded the arrival of Don John, was once more to be let loose. To this point had tended all the policy of Orange-faithful as ever to the proverb with which he had broken off the Breda conferences, “that war was preferable to a doubtful peace.” Even, however, as his policy had pointed to a war as the necessary forerunner of a solid peace with Spain, so had his efforts already advanced the cause of internal religious concord within the provinces themselves. On the 10th of December, a new act of union was signed at Brussels, by which those of the Roman Church and those who had retired from that communion bound themselves to respect and to protect each other with mutual guarantees against all enemies whatsoever. Here was a step beyond the Ghent Pacification, and in the same direction. The first treaty tacitly introduced toleration by suppressing the right of persecution, but the new union placed the Reformed religion on a level with the old. This was the result of the Prince’s efforts; and, in truth, there was no lack of eagerness among these professors of a faith which had been so long under ban, to take advantage of his presence. Out of dark alleys, remote thickets, subterranean conventicles, where the dissenters had so long been trembling for their lives, the oppressed now came forth into the light of day. They indulged openly in those forms of worship which persecution had affected to regard with as much holy horror as the Badahuennan or Hercynian mysteries of Celtic ages could inspire, and they worshipped boldly the common God of Catholic and Puritan, in the words most consonant to their tastes, without dreading the gibbet as an inevitable result of their audacity.

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In truth, the time had arrived for bringing the northern and southern, the Celtic and German, the Protestant and Catholic, hearts together, or else for acquiescing in their perpetual divorce. If the sentiment of nationality, the cause of a common fatherland, could now overcome the attachment to a particular form of worship—if a common danger and a common destiny could now teach the great lesson of mutual toleration, it might yet be possible to create a united Netherland, and defy for ever the power of Spain. Since the Union of Brussels, of January, 1577, the internal cancer of religious discord had again begun to corrode the body politic. The Pacification of Ghent had found the door open to religious toleration. It had not opened, but had left it open. The union of Brussels had closed the door again. Contrary to the hopes of the Prince of Orange and of the patriots who followed in his track, the sanction given to the Roman religion had animated the Catholics to fresh arrogance and fresh persecution. In the course of a few months, the only fruits of the new union, from which so much had been hoped, were to be seen in imprisonments, confiscations, banishments, executions. The Perpetual Edict, by which the fifteen provinces had united in acknowledging Don John while the Protestant stronghold of Holland and Zealand had been placed in a state of isolation by the wise distrust of Orange, had widened the breach between Catholics and Protestants. The subsequent conduct of Don John had confirmed the suspicions and demonstrated the sagacity of the Prince. The seizure of Namur and the open hostility avowed by the Governor once more forced the provinces together. The suppressed flames of nationality burst forth again. Catholic and Protestant, Fleming and Hollander, instinctively approached each other, and felt the necessity of standing once more shoulder to shoulder in defence of their common rights. The Prince of Orange was called for by the unanimous cry of the whole country. He came to Brussels. His first step, as already narrated, was to break off negotiations which had been already ratified by the votes of the states-general. The measure was reconsidered, under pretence of adding certain amendments. Those amendments were the unconditional articles of surrender proposed for Don John’s signature on the 25th of September—articles which could only elicit words of defiance from his lips.

Thus far the Prince’s object was accomplished. A treacherous peace, which would have ensured destruction, was averted, but a new obstacle to the development of his broad and energetic schemes arose in the intrigue which brought the Archduke from Vienna. The cabals of Orange’s secret enemies were again thwarted with the same adroitness to which his avowed antagonists were forced to succumb. Matthias was made the exponent of the new policy, the standard-bearer of the new union which the Prince now succeeded in establishing;

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for his next step was immediately to impress upon the provinces which had thus united in casting down the gauntlet to a common enemy the necessity of uniting in a permanent league. One province was already lost by the fall of Namur. The bonds of a permanent union for the other sixteen could be constructed of but one material—religious toleration, and for a moment, the genius of Orange, always so far beyond his age, succeeded in raising the mass of his countrymen to the elevation upon which he had so long stood alone.

The “new or nearer Union of Brussels” was signed on the 10th of December, eleven months after the formation of the first union. This was the third and, unfortunately, the last confederation of all the Netherlands. The original records have been lost, but it is known that the measure was accepted unanimously in the estates-general as soon as presented. The leading Catholic nobles were with the army, but a deputation, sent to the camp, returned with their signatures and hearty approval; with the signatures and approval of such determined Catholics as the Lalains, Meluns, Egmont, and La Motte. If such men could unite for the sake of the fatherland in an act of religious toleration, what lofty hopes for the future was not the Prince justified in forming; for it was the Prince alone who accomplished this victory of reason over passion. As a monument, not only of his genius, but of the elevated aspirations of a whole people in an age of intolerance, the “closer Union of Brussels” deserves especial place in the history of human progress. Unfortunately, it was destined to a brief existence. The battle of Gemblours was its death-blow, and before the end of a month, the union thus hopefully constructed was shattered for ever. The Netherland people was never united again. By the Union of Utrecht, seven states subsequently rescued their existence, and lived to construct a powerful republic. The rest were destined to remain for centuries in the condition of provinces to a distant metropolis, to be shifted about as make-weights in political balances, and only in our own age to come into the honorable rank of independent constitutional states.

The Prince had, moreover, strengthened himself for the coming struggle by an alliance with England. The thrifty but politic Queen, fearing the result of the secret practices of Alencon—whom Orange, as she suspected, still kept in reserve to be played off, in case of need, against Matthias and Don John—had at last consented to a treaty of alliance and subsidy. On the 7th of January, 1578, the Marquis Havre, envoy from the estates, concluded an arrangement in London, by which the Queen was to lend them her credit—in other words, to endorse their obligations, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds sterling. The money was to be raised wherever the states might be able to negotiate the bills, and her liability was to cease within a year. She was likewise to be collaterally secured

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by pledges from certain cities in the Netherlands. This amount was certainly not colossal, while the conditions were sufficiently parsimonious. At the same time a beginning was made, and the principle of subsidy was established. The Queen, furthermore, agreed to send five thousand infantry and one thousand cavalry to the provinces, under the command of an officer of high rank, who was to have a seat and vote in the Netherland Council of State. These troops were to be paid by the provinces, but furnished by the Queen. The estates were to form no treaty without her knowledge, nor undertake any movement of importance without her consent. In case she should be herself attacked by any foreign power, the provinces were to assist her to the same extent as the amount of aid now afforded to themselves; and in case of a naval war, with a fleet of at least forty ships. It had already been arranged that the appointment of the Prince of Orange as Lieutenant-General for Matthias was a ‘sine qua non’ in any treaty of assistance with England. Soon after the conclusion of this convention, Sir Thomas Wilkes was despatched on a special mission to Spain, and Mr. Leyton sent to confer privately with Don John. It was not probable, however, that the diplomatic skill of either would make this new arrangement palatable to Philip or his Governor.

Within a few days after their signature of this important treaty, the Prince had, at length, wholly succeeded in conquering the conflicting passions in the states-general, and in reconciling them, to a certain extent, with each other. The closer union had been accepted, and now thirty articles, which had been prepared under his superintendence, and had already on the 17th of December been accepted by Matthias, were established as the fundamental terms, according to which the Archduke was to be received as Governor-General. No power whatever was accorded to the young man, who had come so far with eager and ambitious views. As the Prince had neither solicited nor desired a visit which had, on the contrary, been the result of hostile machinations, the Archduke could hardly complain that the power accorded him was but shadowy, and that his presence was rendered superfluous. It was not surprising that the common people gave him the name of Greffier, or registering clerk to the Prince; for his functions were almost limited to the signing of acts which were countersigned by Orange. According to the stipulations of the Queen of England, and the views of the whole popular party, the Prince remained Ruward of Brabant, notwithstanding the appointment of a nominal Governor-General, by whom his own duties were to be superseded.

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The articles which were laid down as the basis upon which the Archduke was to be accepted; composed an ample representative constitution, by which all the legislative and many of the executive powers of government were bestowed upon the states-general or upon the council by them to be elected. To avoid remaining in the condition of a people thus left without a head, the states declared themselves willing to accept Matthias as Governor-General, on condition of the King's subsequent approbation, and upon the general basis of the Ghent treaty. The Archduke, moreover, was to take an oath of allegiance to the King and to the states-general at the same time. He was to govern the land by the advice of a state council, the members of which were to be appointed by the states-general, and were "to be native Netherlanders, true patriots; and neither ambitious nor greedy." In all matters discussed before the state council, a majority of votes was to decide. The Governor-General, with his Council of State, should conclude nothing concerning the common affairs of the nation—such as requests, loans, treaties of peace or declarations of war, alliances or confederacies with foreign nations— without the consent of the states-general. He was to issue no edict or ordinance, and introduce no law, without the consent of the same body duly assembled, and representing each individual province. A majority of the members was declared necessary to a quorum of the council. All acts and despatches were to be drawn up by a member of the board. The states-general were to assemble when, where, and as often as, and remain in session as long as, they might think it expedient. At the request of any individual province, concerning matters about which a convention of the generality was customary, the other states should be bound to assemble without waiting for directions from the Governor-General. The estates of each particular province were to assemble at their pleasure. The governor and council, with advice of the states-general, were to appoint all the principal military officers. Troops were to be enrolled and garrisons established by and with the consent of the states. Governors of provinces were to be appointed by the Governor-General, with advice of his council, and with the consent of the estates of the province interested. All military affairs were to be conducted during war by the governor, with advice of his council, while the estates were to have absolute control over the levying and expenditure of the common funds of the country.

It is sufficiently plain from this brief summary, that the powers thus conferred upon Matthias alone, were absolutely null, while those which he might exercise in conjunction with the state council, were not much more extensive. The actual force of the government—legislative, executive, and, administrative—was lodged in the general assembly, while no authority was left to the King, except the nominal right to approve these

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revolutionary proceedings, according to the statement in the preamble. Such a reservation in favor of his Majesty seemed a superfluous sarcasm. It was furthermore resolved that the Prince of Orange should be appointed Lieutenant-General for Matthias, and be continued in his office of Ruward. This constitution, drawn up under the superintendence of the Prince, had been already accepted by Matthias, while still at Antwerp, and upon the 18th of January, 1578, the ceremony of his inauguration took place.

It was the third triumphal procession which Brussels had witnessed within nine months. It was also the most brilliant of all; for the burghers, as if to make amends to the Archduke for the actual nullity to which he had been reduced, seemed resolved to raise him to the seventh heaven of allegory. By the rhetorical guilds he was regarded as the most brilliant constellation of virtues which had yet shone above the Flemish horizon. A brilliant cavalcade, headed by Orange, accompanied by Count John of Nassau, the Prince de Chimay and other notables, met him at Vilvoorde, and escorted him to the city gate. On an open field, outside the town, Count Bossu had arranged a review of troops, concluding with a sham-fight, which, in the words of a classical contemporary, seemed as “bloody a rencontre as that between Duke Miltiades of Athens and King Darius upon the plains of Attics.” The procession entered the Louvain gate, through a splendid triumphal arch, filled with a band of invisible musicians. “I believe that Orpheus had never played so melodiously on his harp,” says the same authority, “nor Apollo on his lyre, nor Pan on his lute, as the city waits then performed.” On entering the gates, Matthias was at once delivered over to the hands of mythology, the burghers and rhetoricians taking possession of their illustrious captive, and being determined to outdo themselves in demonstrations of welcome. The representatives of the “nine nations” of Brussels met him in the Ritter-street, followed by a gorgeous retinue. Although it was mid-day, all bore flaming torches. Although it was January, the streets were strewed with flowers. The houses were festooned with garlands, and hung with brilliant silks and velvets. The streets were thronged with spectators, and encumbered with triumphal arches. On the Grande Place always the central scene in Brussels, whether for comedies, or tournaments, or executions, the principal dramatic effects had been accumulated. The splendid front of the Hotel de Ville was wreathed with scarfs and banners; its windows and balconies, as well as those of the picturesque houses which formed the square, were crowded with gaily-dressed women. Upon the area of the place, twenty-four theatres had been erected, where a aeries of magnificent living pictures were represented by the most beautiful young females that could be found in the city. All were attired in brocades, embroideries, and cloth of gold.

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The subjects of the tableaux vivants were, of course, most classic, for the Netherlanders were nothing, if not allegorical; yet, as spectacles, provided by burghers and artisans for the amusement of their fellow-citizens, they certainly proved a considerable culture in the people who could thus be amused. All the groups were artistically arranged. Upon one theatre stood Juno with her peacock, presenting Matthias with the city of Brussels, which she held, beautifully modelled, in her hand. Upon another, Cybele gave him the keys, Reason handed him a bridle, Hebe a basket of flowers, Wisdom a looking-glass and two law books, Diligence a pair of spurs; while Constancy, Magnanimity, Prudence, and other virtues, furnished him with a helmet; corslet, spear, and shield. Upon other theatres, Bellona presented him with several men-at-arms, tied in a bundle; Fame gave him her trumpet, and Glory her crown. Upon one stage Quintus Curtius, on horseback, was seen plunging into the yawning abyss; upon six others Scipio Africanus was exhibited, as he appeared in the most picturesque moments of his career. The beardless Archduke had never achieved anything, save his nocturnal escape from Vienna in his night-gown; but the honest Flemings chose to regard him as a re-incarnation of those two eminent Romans. Carried away by their own learning, they already looked upon him as a myth; and such indeed he was destined to remain throughout his Netherland career. After surveying all these wonders, Matthias was led up the hill again to the ducal palace, where, after hearing speeches and odes till he was exhausted, he was at last allowed to eat his supper and go to bed.

Meantime the citizens feasted in the streets. Bonfires were blazing everywhere, at which the people roasted “geese, pigs, capons, partridges, and chickens,” while upon all sides were the merriest piping and dancing. Of a sudden, a fiery dragon was seen flying through the air. It poised for a while over the heads of the revelling crowd in the Grande Place, and then burst with a prodigious explosion, sending forth rockets and other fireworks in every direction. This exhibition, then a new one, so frightened the people, that they all took to their heels, “as if a thousand soldiers had assaulted them,” tumbling over each other in great confusion, and so dispersing to their homes.

The next day Matthias took the oaths as Governor-General, to support the new constitution, while the Prince of Orange was sworn in as Lieutenant-General and Governor of Brabant. Upon the next a splendid banquet was given them in the grand ball of the Hotel de Ville, by the states-general, and when the cloth was removed, Rhetoric made her last and most ingenious demonstration, through the famous guild of “Mary with the Flower Garland.”

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Two individuals—the one attired as a respectable burgher; the other as a clerical personage in gown and bands-made their appearance upon a stage, opposite the seats of their Highnesses, and pronounced a long dialogue in rhyme. One of the speakers rejoiced in the appellation of the “Desiring Heart,” the other was called “Common Comfort.” Common Sense might have been more to the purpose, but appeared to have no part in the play. Desiring Heart, being of an inquisitive disposition, propounded a series of puzzling questions, mythological in their nature, which seemed like classical conundrums, having reference, mainly, to the proceedings of Venus, Neptune, Juno, and other divinities. They appeared to have little to do with Matthias or the matter in hand, but Common Comfort knew better. That clerical personage, accordingly, in a handsome allowance of rhymes, informed his despairing colleague that everything would end well; that Jupiter, Diana, Venus, and the rest of them would all do their duty, and that Belgica would be relieved from all her woes, at the advent of a certain individual. Whereupon cried Desiring Heart,

> Oh Common Comfort who is he?
> His name, and of what family?

To which Comfort responded by mentioning the Archduke, in a poetical and highly-complimentary strain, with handsome allusions to the inevitable Quintus Curtius and Scipio Africanus. The concluding words of the speech were not spoken, but were taken as the cue for a splendid charade; the long-suffering Scipio again making his appearance, in company with Alexander and Hannibal; the group typifying the future government of Matthias. After each of these, heroic individuals had spouted a hundred lines or so, the play was terminated, and Rhetoric took her departure. The company had remained at table during this long representation, and now the dessert was served, consisting of a “richly triumphant banquet of confectionary, marmalade, and all kinds of genteelnesses in sugar.”

Meanwhile, Don John sat chafing and almost frenzied with rage at Namur. Certainly he had reasons enough for losing his temper. Never since the days of Maximilian had king’s brother been so bearded by rebels. The Cross was humbled in the dust, the royal authority openly derided, his Majesty’s representative locked up in a fortress, while “the accursed Prince of Orange” reigned supreme in Brussels, with an imperial Archduke for his private secretary.

The Governor addressed a long, private, and most bitter letter to the Emperor, for the purpose of setting himself right in the opinion of that potentate, and of giving him certain hints as to what was expected of the imperial court by Philip and himself. He expressed confidence that the imperial commissioners would have some effect in bringing about the pacification of the Netherlands, and protested his own strong desire for such a result, provided always that the two great

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points of the Catholic religion and his Majesty's authority were preserved intact. "In the hope that those articles would be maintained," said he, "I have emptied cities and important places of their garrisons, when I might easily have kept the soldiers, and with the soldiers the places, against all the world, instead of consigning them to the care of men who at this hour have arms in their hand against their natural prince." He declared vehemently that in all his conduct, since his arrival in the provinces, he had been governed exclusively by the interests of Philip, an object which he should steadily pursue to the end. He urged, too, that the Emperor, being of the same house as Philip, and therefore more obliged than all others to sustain his quarrel, would do well to espouse his cause with all the warmth possible. "The forgetfulness by vassals," said Don John, "of the obedience due to their sovereign is so dangerous, that all princes and potentates, even those at the moment exempt from trouble; should assist in preparing the remedy, in order that their subjects also may not take it into their heads to do the like, liberty being a contagious disease, which goes on infecting one neighbour after another, if the cure be not promptly applied." It was, he averred, a desperate state of things for monarchs, when subjects having obtained such concessions as the Netherlanders had obtained, nevertheless loved him and obeyed him so little. They showed, but too clearly, that the causes alleged by them had been but pretexts, in order to effect designs, long ago conceived, to overthrow the ancient constitution of the country, and to live thenceforward in unbridled liberty. So many indecent acts had been committed prejudicial to religion and to his Majesty's grandeur, that the Governor avowed his, determination to have no farther communication with the provinces without fresh commands to that effect. He begged the Emperor to pay no heed to what the states said, but to observe what they did. He assured him that nothing could be more senseless than the reports that Philip and his Governor-General in the Netherlands were negotiating with France, for the purpose of alienating the provinces from the Austrian crown. Philip, being chief of the family, and sovereign of the Netherlands, could not commit the absurdity of giving away his own property to other people, nor would Don John choose to be an instrument in so foolish a transaction. The Governor entreated the Emperor, therefore, to consider such fables as the invention of malcontents and traitors, of whom there were no lack at his court, and to remember that nothing was more necessary for the preservation of the greatness of his family than to cultivate the best relations with all its members. "Therefore," said he, with an absurd affectation of candor, "although I make no doubt whatever that the expedition hitherwards of the Archduke Matthias has been made with the best intentions; nevertheless, many are of opinion that

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it would have been better altogether omitted. If the Archduke," he continued, with hardly dissembled irony, "be desirous of taking charge of his Majesty's affairs, it would be preferable to employ himself in the customary manner. Your Majesty would do a laudable action by recalling him from this place, according to your Majesty's promise to me to that effect." In conclusion, Don John complained that difficulties had been placed in his way for making levies of troops in the Empire, while every facility had been afforded to the rebels. He therefore urgently insisted that so unnatural and unjust a condition of affairs should be remedied.

Don John was not sorry in his heart that the crisis was at last come. His chain was broken. His wrath exploded in his first interview with Leyton, the English envoy, whom Queen Elizabeth had despatched to calm, if possible, his inevitable anger at her recent treaty with the states. He knew nothing of England, he said, nor of France, nor of the Emperor. His Catholic Majesty had commissioned him now to make war upon these rebellious provinces. He would do it with all his heart. As for the Emperor, he would unchain the Turks upon him for his perfidy. As for the burghers of Brussels, they would soon feel his vengeance.

It was very obvious that these were not idle threats. War had again broken loose throughout these doomed provinces. A small but well-appointed army had been rapidly collecting under the banner of Don John at Luxemburg, Peter Ernest Mansfeld had brought many well-trained troops from France, and Prince Alexander of Parma had arrived with several choice and veteran regiments of Italy and Spain. The old schoolfellow, playmate and comrade of Don John, was shocked-on his arrival, to witness the attenuated frame and care-worn features of his uncle. The son of Charles the Fifth, the hero of Lepanto, seemed even to have lost the air of majesty which was so natural to him, for petty insults, perpetual crosses, seemed to have left their squalid traces upon his features. Nevertheless, the crusader was alive again, at the notes of warlike preparations which now resounded throughout the land.

On the 25th of January he issued a proclamation, couched in three languages—French, German, and Flemish. He declared in this document that he had not come to enslave the provinces, but to protect them. At the same time he meant to re-establish his Majesty's authority, and the down-trod religion of Rome. He summoned all citizens and all soldiers throughout the provinces to join his banners, offering them pardon for their past offences, and protection against heretics and rebels. This declaration was the natural consequence of the exchange of defiances which had already taken place, and it was evident also that the angry manifesto was soon to be followed up by vigorous blows. The army of Don John already numbered more than twenty thousand well-seasoned and disciplined veterans. He was himself the most

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illustrious chieftain in Europe. He was surrounded by lieutenants cf the most brilliant reputation. Alexander of Parma, who had fought with distinction at Lepanto, was already recognised as possessing that signal military genius which was soon to stamp him as the first soldier of his age, while Mansfeld, Mondragon, Mendoza, and other distinguished officers, who had already won so much fame in the Netherlands, had now returned to the scene of their former achievements.

On the other hand, the military affairs of the states were in confusion. Troops in nearly equal numbers to those of the royal army had been assembled, but the chief offices had been bestowed, by a mistaken policy, upon the great nobles. Already the jealousy of Orange, entertained by their whole order was painfully apparent. Notwithstanding the signal popularity which had made his appointment as Lieutenant-general inevitable it was not easy for him always to vindicate his authority over captious and rival magnates. He had every wish to conciliate the affections of men whom he could not in his heart respect, and he went as far in gratifying their ambition as comported with his own dignity; perhaps farther than was consistent with the national interests. He was still willing to trust Lalain, of whose good affection to the country he felt sure. Re had even been desirous of declining the office of Lieutenant-General, in order to avoid giving that nobleman the least occasion to think “that he would do him, or any other gentleman of the army, prejudice in any single matter in the world.” This magnanimity had, not been repaid with corresponding confidence. We have already seen that Lalain had been secretly in the interest of Anjou ever since his wife and himself had lost their hearts to Margaret of Navarre; yet the Count was chief commander of the infantry in the states’ army then assembled. Robert Melun, Vicomte de Gand, was commander of the cavalry, but he had recently been private envoy from Don John to the English Queen. Both these gentlemen, together with Pardieu De la Motte, general of the artillery, were voluntarily absent from the forces, under pretext of celebrating the wedding of the Seigneur De Bersel with the niece and heiress of the unfortunate Marquis of Bergen. The ghost of that ill-starred noble might almost have seemed to rise at the nuptial banquet of his heiress, to warn the traitors of the signal and bloody massacre which their treachery was soon to occasion. Philip Egmont, eldest son of the famous Lamoral, was with the army, as was the Seigneur de Heze, hero of the State Council’s arrest, and the unstable Havre. But little was to be hoped from such leaders. Indeed, the affairs of the states continued to be in as perplexed a condition as that which honest John of Nassau had described some weeks before. “There were very few patriots,” he had said, “but plenty of priests, with no lack of inexperienced lads—some looking for distinction, and others for pelf.”

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The two armies had been mustered in the latter days of January. The Pope had issued a bull for the benefit of Don John, precisely similar to those formerly employed in the crusades against the Saracens. Authority was given him to levy contributions upon ecclesiastical property, while full absolution, at the hour of death, for all crimes committed during a whole lifetime, was proclaimed to those who should now join the standard of the Cross. There was at least no concealment. The Crescent-wearing Zealanders had been taken at their word, and the whole nation of Netherlanders were formally banned as unbelievers. The forces of Don John were mustered at Marche in Luxemburg; those of the states in a plain within a few miles of Namur. Both armies were nearly equal in number, amounting to nearly twenty thousand each, including a force of two thousand cavalry on each side. It had been the original intention of the patriots to attack Don John in Namur. Having learned, however, that he purposed marching forth himself to offer battle, they decided to fall back upon Gemblours, which was nine miles distant from that city. On the last day of January, they accordingly broke up their camp at Saint Martius, before dawn, and marched towards Gemblours. The chief commander was De Goignies, an old soldier of Charles the Fifth, who had also fought at Saint Quintin. The states' army was disposed in three divisions. The van consisted of the infantry regiments of De Heze and Montigny, flanked by a protective body of light horse. The centre, composed of the Walloon and German regiments, with a few companies of French, and thirteen companies of Scotch and English under Colonel Balfour, was commanded by two most distinguished officers, Bossu and Champagny. The rear, which, of course, was the post of responsibility and honor, comprised all the heavy cavalry, and was commanded by Philip Egmont and Lumey de la Marck. The Marquis Havre and the General-in-chief, Goignies, rode to and fro, as the army proceeded, each attended by his staff. The troops of Don John broke up from before Namur with the earliest dawn, and marched in pursuit of the retiring foe. In front was nearly the whole of the cavalry-carabineers, lancers, and heavy dragoons. The centre, arranged in two squares, consisted chiefly of Spanish infantry, with a lesser number of Germans. In the rear came the Walloons, marching also in a square, and protecting the baggage and ammunition. Charles Mansfeld had been left behind with a reserved force, stationed on the Meuse; Ottavio Gonzaga commanded in front, Ernest Mansfeld brought up the rear; while in the centre rode Don John himself, attended by the Prince of Parma. Over his head streamed the crucifix-emblazoned banner, with its memorable inscription—In hoc signo vici Turcos, in hoc Haereticos vincam.

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Small detachments of cavalry had been sent forward; under Olivera and Acosta, to scour the roads and forests, and to disturb all ambuscades which might have been prepared. From some stragglers captured by these officers, the plans of the retreating generals were learned. The winter's day was not far advanced, when the rearward columns of the states' army were descried in the distance. Don John, making a selection of some six hundred cavalry, all picked men, with a thousand infantry, divided the whole into two bodies, which he placed under command of Gonzaga and the famous old Christopher Mondragon. These officers received orders to hang on the rear of the enemy, to harass him, and to do him all possible damage consistent with the possibility of avoiding a general engagement, until the main army under Parma and Don John should arrive. The orders were at first strictly obeyed. As the skirmishing grew hotter, however, Goazaga observed that a spirited cavalry officer, named Perotti, had already advanced, with a handful of men, much further within the reach of the hostile forces than was deemed expedient. He sent hastily to recal the too eager chieftain. The order, delivered in a tone more peremptory than agreeable, was flatly disobeyed. "Tell Ottavio Gonzaga," said Perotti, "that I never yet turned my back on the enemy, nor shall I now begin. Moreover, were I ever so much inclined to do so, retreat is impossible." The retiring army was then proceeding along the borders of a deep ravine, filled with mire and water, and as broad and more dangerous than a river. In the midst of the skirmishing, Alexander of Parma rode up to reconnoitre. He saw at once that the columns of the enemy were marching unsteadily to avoid being precipitated into this creek. He observed the waving of their spears, the general confusion of their ranks, and was quick to take advantage of the fortunate moment. Pointing out to the officers about him the opportunity thus offered of attacking the retiring army unawares in flank, he assembled, with great rapidity, the foremost companies of cavalry already detached from the main body. Mounting a fresh and powerful horse, which Camillo Monte held in readiness for him, he signified his intention of dashing through the dangerous ravine, and dealing a stroke where it was least expected, "Tell Don John of Austria," he cried to an officer whom he sent back to the Commander-in-chief, "that Alexander of Parma has plunged into the abyss, to perish there, or to come-forth again victorious."

The sudden thought was executed with lightning-like celerity. In an instant the bold rider was already struggling through the dangerous swamp; in another, his powerful charger had carried him across. Halting for a few minutes, lance in rest, till his troops had also forced their passage, gained the level ground unperceived, and sufficiently breathed their horses, he drew up his little force in a compact column.

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Then, with a few words of encouragement, he launched them at the foe. The violent and entirely unexpected shock was even more successful than the Prince had anticipated. The hostile cavalry reeled and fell into hopeless confusion, Egmont in vain striving to rally them to resistance. That name had lost its magic. Goignies also attempted, without success, to restore order among the panic-struck ranks. The sudden conception of Parma, executed as suddenly and in so brilliant a manner, had been decisive. Assaulted in flank and rear at the same moment, and already in temporary confusion, the cavalry of the enemy turned their backs and fled. The centre of the states' army thus left exposed, was now warmly attacked by Parma. It had, moreover, been already thrown into disorder by the retreat of its own horse, as they charged through them in rapid and disgraceful panic. The whole army bloke to pieces at once, and so great was the trepidation, that the conquered troops had hardly courage to run away. They were utterly incapable of combat. Not a blow was struck by the fugitives. Hardly a man in the Spanish ranks was wounded; while, in the course of an hour and a half, the whole force of the enemy was exterminated. It is impossible to state with accuracy the exact numbers slain. Some accounts spoke of ten thousand killed, or captive, with absolutely no loss on the royal side. Moreover, this slaughter was effected, not by the army under Don John, but by so small a fragment of it, that some historians have even set down the whole number of royalists engaged at the commencement of the action, at six hundred, increased afterwards to twelve hundred. By this calculation, each Spaniard engaged must have killed ten enemies with his own hand; and that within an hour and a half's space! Other historians more wisely omit the exact statistics of the massacre, and allow that a very few—ten or eleven, at most—were slain within the Spanish ranks. This, however, is the utmost that is claimed by even the Netherland historians, and it is, at any rate, certain that the whole states' army was annihilated.

Rarely had a more brilliant exploit been performed by a handful of cavalry. To the distinguished Alexander of Parma, who improvised so striking and complete a victory out of a fortuitous circumstance, belonged the whole credit of the day, for his quick eye detected a passing weakness of the enemy, and turned it to terrible account with the promptness which comes from genius alone. A whole army was overthrown. Everything belonging to the enemy fell into the hands of the Spaniards. Thirty-four standards, many field-pieces, much camp equipage, and ammunition, besides some seven or eight thousand dead bodies, and six hundred living prisoners, were the spoils of that winter's day. Of the captives, some were soon afterwards hurled off the bridge at Namur, and drowned like dogs in the Meuse, while the rest were all hanged, none escaping with life. Don John's clemency was not superior to that of his sanguinary predecessors.

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And so another proof was added—if proofs were still necessary of Spanish prowess. The Netherlanders may be pardoned if their foes seemed to them supernatural, and almost invulnerable. How else could these enormous successes be accounted for? How else could thousands fall before the Spanish swords, while hardly a single Spanish corpse told of effectual resistance? At Jemmingen, Alva had lost seven soldiers, and slain seven thousand; in the Antwerp Fury, two hundred Spaniards, at most, had fallen, while eight thousand burghers and states' troops had been butchered; and now at Gemblours, six, seven, eight, ten—Heaven knew how many—thousand had been exterminated, and hardly a single Spaniard had been slain! Undoubtedly, the first reason for this result was the superiority of the Spanish soldiers. They were the boldest, the best disciplined, the most experienced in the world. Their audacity, promptness, and ferocity made them almost invincible. In this particular action, at least half the army of Don John was composed of Spanish or Spanish-Italian veterans. Moreover, they were commanded by the most renowned captains of the age—by Don John himself, and Alexander of Parma, sustained by such veterans as Mondragon, the hero of the memorable submarine expeditions; Mendoza, the accomplished cavalry officer, diplomatist, and historian; and Mansfeld, of whom Don John had himself written to the King that his Majesty had not another officer of such account in all the Netherlands. Such officers as these, besides Gonzaga, Camillo Monte, Mucio Pagano, at the head of such troops as fought that day under the banner of the Cross, might go far in accounting for this last and most tremendous victory of the Inquisition. On the other hand, although Bossu and Champagny were with the states' army, yet their hearts were hardly with the cause. Both had long been loyal, and had earned many laurels against the rebels, while Champagny was still devoutly a Papist, and wavered painfully between his hatred to heresy and to Spain. Egmont and De Heze were raw, unpractised lads, in whom genius did not come to supply the place of experience. The Commander, De Goignies, was a veteran, but a veteran who had never gained much glory, and the chiefs of the cavalry, infantry, and artillery, were absent at the Brussels wedding. The news of this additional massacre inflicted upon a nation, for which Berghen and Montigny had laid down their lives, was the nuptial benediction for Berghen's heiress; for it was to the chief wedding guests upon, that occasion that the disaster was justly attributed. The rank and file of the states' army were mainly mercenaries, with whom the hope of plunder was the prevailing motive; the chief commanders were absent; while those officers who were with the troops were neither heartily friendly to their own flag nor sufficiently experienced to make it respected.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

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Absurd affectation of candor
Always less apt to complain of irrevocable events
Imagined, and did the work of truth
Judas Maccabaeus
Neither ambitious nor greedy
Superfluous sarcasm

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